

THE

Australia's magazine of the performing arts

Sept/Oct 1977 \$1.95

Theatre Australia

Marvellous Melbourne Part 2

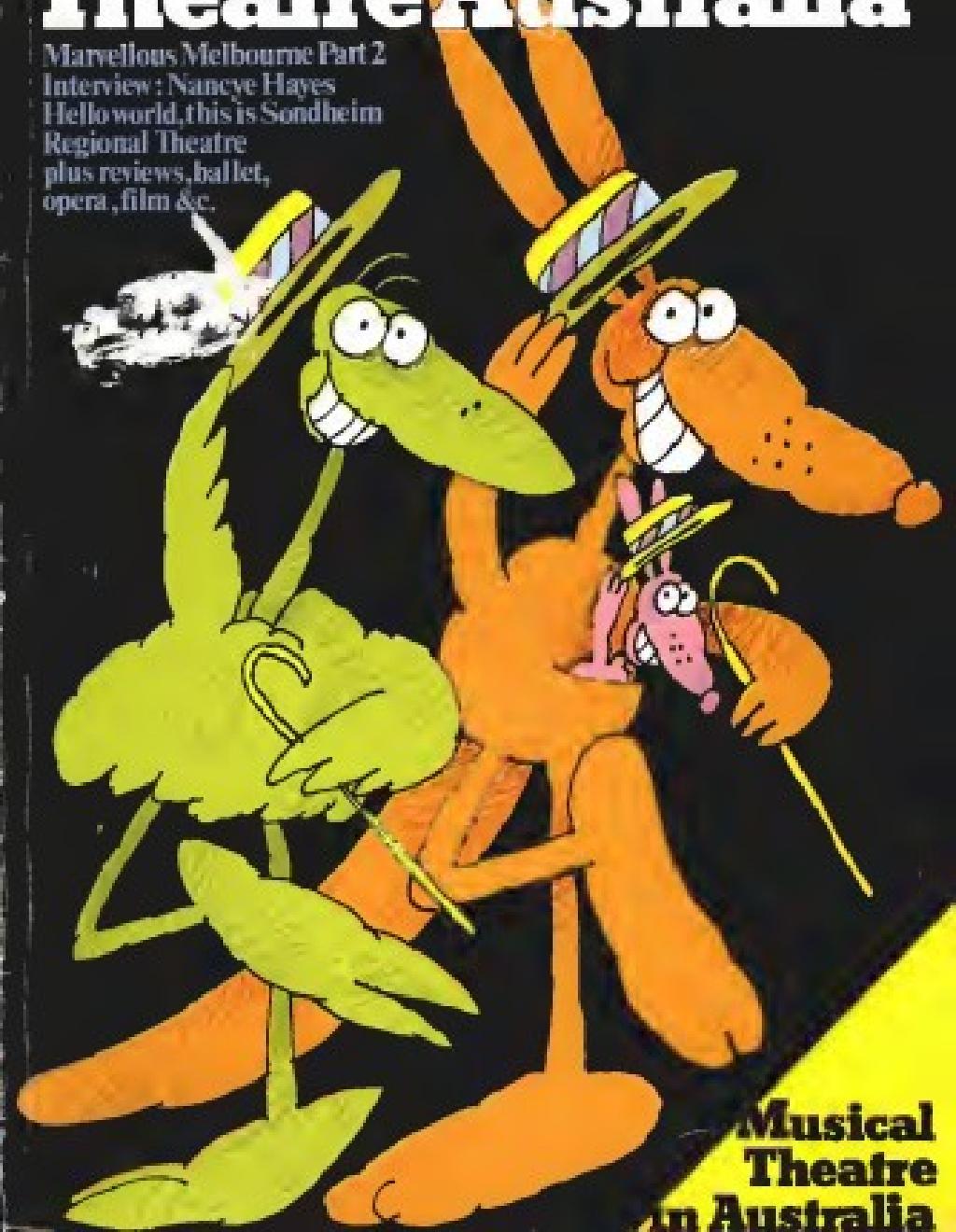
Interview : Nancye Hayes

Hello world, this is Sondheim

Regional Theatre

plus reviews, ballet,

opera, film &c.



Musical
Theatre
in Australia

NIMROD

Until Sunday 30 October
Nimrod Upstairs

JACK

by Jim McNeil
directed by Kim Holder
designed by Larry Eastwood
John Cleaton, Barbara Dennis, Martin Harris,
Malcolm Keith
The private hell of a perceptive survivor from Long
Bay, Penitentiary and Grafton gaols.

Second Sensational Year
Playbox Melbourne

Gordon Chater The Elocution of Benjamin Franklin

by Steve J. Spears
directed by Richard Wherrett
designed by Larry Eastwood
Winner of Four National Professional Theatre Awards
and Three National Critics' Awards
Gordon Chater in this Nimrod production moves to
London's West End next March.
Now presented by Parachute Productions.

From Wednesday 9 November
Nimrod Upstairs
A Visiting Production from
The Marquette Theatre of Australia

ALICE IN WONDER LAND

Bilious puppeteer Richard Blackshaw takes a mis-
sion of 'Alice's Adventures' into Pimpinjana as the
basis for his shadow production. Alice fans will find
the setting transposed to the centre of Australia with
the frog faced man (the frog boomer), the Kangaroo
(the white rabbit), the Koala (the dormouse) and
the Witch-Spirit (Queen of Hearts).

Nimrod Theatre
390 Elizabeth Street
Surry Hills Sydney 2010

until Sunday 9 October
Nimrod Downstairs

FATNSHEN

by David Hare
based on the book by William Hinton
directed by Richard Wherrett
Alan Badel, Tim Bentinck, Margaret Cameron,
Niki Erdmann, John Ley, Suzanne Royleman,
George Stavrou, Bill Sumner, Stephen Thomas
'Translation in a Chinese Village: Which out, there's
wicks in the bed' — B J Pritchard

From Saturday 22 October
Nimrod Downstairs

Ashes

by David Rudkin
directed by Kim Holder
A superb and overwhelmingly eloquent account of a
childless marriage
Cast to be announced.

From Saturday 3 December
Nimrod Upstairs

THE CLUB

by David Williamson
directed by John Bell
designed by Tom Beavenman
Jeff Astley, Diana Renshaw, Ron Graham,
Paul Huddick, Iva Kanti, Barry Lovett
David Williamson hits the lid off the backroom
politics, the buying and selling, backstabbing and
bulldozing that regulate the life of a suburban
football club.



Theatre

September/October 1977
Volume 2, Number 3

Australia

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COMMENT

Theatre has always been most closely associated with the way of life of capital cities, and it certainly has its major centres within them in Australia. Though London, New York, Paris, cities are well known in theatre centres there are other important theatre companies operating in other areas throughout their respective countries, just as in Australia there are companies working outside capitals whose contributions and value must not be overlooked.

There are many amateur companies very active in the regions, and it is natural to suggest that these fulfil the only function that theatres can certainlly offer, that the repertories they provide cater fully for the occupational needs of professionals and people go because they are involved with the group, whereas they would not be interested in going along to professional theatre per se. This is very misleading. Both of the varieties mentioned above, and the Regional Theatre Company at Wagga (see model) have proved that regional professional theatre is both needed and wanted. Australian theatres have their own very important function, but a full-time theatre company maintains a standard of excellence that can only be reached by people who devote their entire working life to theatre.

Of course various touring productions come to the provincial towns with some regularity, but these are in no way a substitute for a permanent theatre company in a community. Just as any theatre caters to the particular taste of its audience, so theatre in country areas speaks to those areas in basically all or part of them. Terry Clarke says of his work at the HVTC that Newcastle felt the company to be a Sydney concept foisted upon it, and it was not until the actors decided to remain in Newcastle although the company had gone into recess, determined to fight for a resident theatre company at Newcastle that the town really took them to its heart.

There has been much talking of glories and dooms about the results of these early experiments in regional theatre. The end of the Old Town Armidale project after six months is certainly not due to any failure, it was scheduled to run for that length of time and appears to have been successful beyond all expectations. So much so that the Oldie has had a brief revival in Sydney and the project will be started up again next year for a further period. There is to be a full report on past achievement and future plans in the next issue of the second part of our look at regional theatre

With the Hunter Valley Theatre Company, in pre-war terms the venture has been a success, though relevance is an argument and not a like of suffice. The big of gloom and doom seems at last to be clearing and a low cost programme like Terry Clarke (Queen and Country) is intended to get the company alive again.

Armidale had much more money and a long history back to Sydney to turn to Hunter Valley was on its own with a small plot and, rather, many setbacks beyond its control. At Wagga the Australia Council and NSW Government share the cost of the two professional salaries; their motto is actually making a profit at the box office.

All these companies have proven that what the regions respond to is not artistic condescension but existing theatre. Armidale had then turning up on streets for Arville and a groping Oldie, Hunter Valley and Wagga have both had an outstanding response to Macbeth etc. They could get away with the simple and pretentious, there yet aren't the entire groups of theatre around to support such programming.

But of all, the Hunter Valley is perhaps the most important — which is why the profession has rallied around web benefits to support it. It shows in a fully professional company trying to work all the year round. And the eyes of the Federal Funding Agreement and cultural departments are on it, to see whether it can be made a go of before packing up in their own area. If true success as the name of decentralisation of theatre will be set back twenty years.

At another end of the scale it's good to see an all Australian company of actors coming together for what is shaping up towards a very stylish production of a collage of Southern material. See it first in Melbourne. And good that the Theatre Royal, which has had some difficulties finding suitable shows, is being used as the venue for such a highly acclaimed musical tribute. The home material might not be homegrown, but virtually everything else is. Recognition of our own stars is surprising at last. Regional theatre is as much that has come very much in the face in the last few months, as two projects, that of the Old Townie Armidale project, and the Newcastle Hunter Valley Theatre Company, have been seen to come to a close one way or another.

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The passing of *The Independent*

Toni Reed

An era of Australian theatre history came to a grinding halt on Wednesday 6 July 1977, when the Independent Theatre was forced to close its doors for the last time. This theatre which had almost become an institution in Sydney's North Shore had been losing money for the past ten years and it was virtually a matter of time before the final crash came.

The Independent Theatre, which was established in 1959 has a remarkable and commendable history. The theatrical situation in Australia in which this theatre was nurtured gave it an tough core and ability to survive in the face of almost any crisis. It was in an atmosphere of profit-seeking commercial management taking pictures and the Great Depression that Dora Fison founded what was to become one of the most distinguished theatres in Sydney - and for some time Sydney's only professional group.

The policy of the theatre from its earliest days was to present the world's best plays as well as developing Australian talent in the full theatrical sphere of acting, directing and writing.

From 1959 to 1959 the Independent operated in various city locations, including the Conservatorium of Music. In June 1959, Mr Harold Bowyer, General Manager of J.C. Williamson, was invited for a new board with a well-established repertory to manage a theatre he had in North Sydney. Later that year the Independent took over the building despite the qualms among some members who were doubtful about its success in the theatrically unknown North Shore. These fears were soon quelled as it became obvious that the Independent's reputation had carried them considerably into the new premises.

Saturday 3 September 1959, was chosen as the opening night. The theatre opened to a crowded house with French Whistler Town. At midnight Bowyer declared war on Germany and the Second World War had begun. The very fact that this new venture on the North Shore was able to withstand the depression and hardships of war is proof enough of the grip it had on the Sydney community.

Dora Fison's policy of presenting at least one Australian play a year certainly brought results when in 1941 Party Begins

by Senator Lockie-Elliott reached the stage. Party Begins had been turned down by professional and amateur management until finally taken up by Dora Fison where it broke all box office records at the Independent. It was then taken over by commercial management which spared it for three years in Australia and New Zealand.

This was just one example of the way the Independent took the precedent of many new and exciting productions which commercial managers were not usually prepared to back.

Some other extremely successful productions include - *Misunderstanding*, *Reverend Perceval*, *Black Cliffs*, *The Last, Our Queen and Touch of Gold*.

The Independent Theatre began a policy of regular Saturday afternoon children's matinees in 1945. This has been consistently successful as an introduction and development of young enthusiastic audiences.

The School of Drama Art founded in 1952 was an integral part of the theatre which encouraged and trained local talents. Some students include Ray Lovett, Jill Parry and Adele Berlin.

The theatre thrived during its heyday of thirty odd years but over the last ten years its popularity dropped considerably. Possible explanations include a maturing audience experimenting with new theatres and the Independent's dated and inflexible. Due to lack of finance only a core staff was maintained — director, theatre manager, stage manager, technician and cleaner. For five years in operation such a theatre is a massive job.

Dora Fison, the extraordinary lady, who founded and often carried this theatre, devoted herself entirely and completely to it in 1956. 'The First Lady of Australian Theatre' was honoured with an OBE for her services to theatre.

The principal trouble which culminated in the final collapse of the theatre was its dependence on government grants which at best were irregular and uncertain. The Independent seemed to become the 'Underbelly' of Sydney theatre.

The Independent Theatre's contribution to Australian theatre is immeasurable as not only did it bridge a gap during the decline of the professional theatre but it also gave the Australian audience good theatre which it would otherwise have missed.

It may be unknown quantity when I first began but over the years many of its ideas and innovations became the premise of other theatres. It is very sad to see the

passing of an era. One can only hope that something will rise from its ashes.

Alan Schneider, visiting director

Barry Eaton

For the last few years the Peter Sellars Foundation has imported a theatrical talent to work with local actors and directors on a workshop basis. Names like Steve Adler, William Gaikwad and Michael Mahaney have now been joined by Alan Schneider from the United States. During July Mr Schneider worked with up and coming directors and actors who volunteered to be "seed". The vehicle used was the works of Samuel Beckett.

A familiar task.

To say Alan Schneider is well known in the theatre is to underplay his importance. He has directed over 100 productions at regional theatres, off and on Broadway. He has produced off-Broadway Beckett's plays as well as most of Pinter and Brecht in the US.

He directed Albee's *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf* originally, for which he won the Tony Award, in the same year he won the Obie for Peter's *The Drowning* and *The Collector* — the only director to have won both awards in the same year.

At present he is the Director of the drama division of the Juilliard School at the Lincoln Centre. His credentials are illustrious.

I attended one of his workshops at the NIDA theatre in Sydney and spent three fascinating hours. The man is a pro — his whole approach to directing and acting is really so simple and logical you wonder why you hadn't thought of it before. That is part of Alan Schneider's philosophy. Often what is obvious is the hardest to see.

He works with his directors and actors in a very close way, talking with them, often cajoling and dragging the responses from them. Making them do the work and keep the flexibility but never in a smart, know-it-all way.

You must respect the man. He takes each obvious route and does it in an enterprising manner. A former actor himself he uses theatricality to great advantage when interacting.

What does he hope to achieve with the three week workshop? I put this to him after the first week:

"I hope that at the end of three weeks I will have them with something to think about for future reference. The application of that something will take the rest of their lives, just as it takes the rest of ours. I haven't achieved ultimate truth which I'm transmitting to the next generation. I am struggling with something that I am sharing with other people and that struggle is constant."

The main aim is to give them another perspective, another point of view about directing.

There is no such thing as an instant course in directing to Schneider. However he does have a few questions which might help to be known at Schneider's bar:

"Basically theatre is not a place to reproduce life but to examine it, or make it more interesting. Do this then you add variety in a subtle way. For instance in my productions if an actor goes up from a certain chair, moves to the fire, and then returns to his seat, I direct him to sit in a different chair." That's Schneider's law on movement.

What about another law?

"How to let anybody notice that you're doing these things, I suppose."

The Peter Schenck Foundation has been supporting young directors to experiment overseas direction for seven years now. What effect has this had?

"It's very hard to judge what observable effect this has had," says Jacqueline Ross. "Just working with these people must have had a good effect eventually."

This is Alan Schneider's philosophy, an exchange of ideas. He travels a lot, always observing, but always ready to get involved.

He is searching for an Australian play to produce in America, having done two in the past — *Sweeney of the Savannah* and *Alan Brett's Tom*.

After the Australian tour, Alan Schneider returns to the U.S. to direct *Mother Courage* for the Acting Company which is a national classical repertory company which tours all over the U.S.A. for forty weeks a year and also plays a month in New York.

Nancy Hayes: "I keep getting rediscovered . . ."

Barry Eaton

Nancy Hayes is a dedicated, talented and hard-working actress. That almost says it all, just like a patiently-bred foal in the stable; an foal could be described as up and down, but for Nancy Hayes it is like being a ping pong ball.

"I keep getting discovered every few years," she says. "It all started with the chores of *My Fair Lady* working as a dancer. Then five years later *Sweet Charity* and the Hollywood type step to stardom and instant fame."



(Did she expand greatly through all that?)

"Well, I know that those kinds of parts aren't going to come along every year. Over in America they have people writing especially for individual talents at the classical theatre. Big parts in musicals don't turn up every day though and even Gwen Verdon didn't work in a big show for ten years after *Charley*."

Many people think that Nancy Hayes was in great periods of "fame" after *Charley*. In reality she worked for various theatre companies around Australia in a great variety of roles.

"I have also been in some long runs," Hayes recalls. "Pippa, Anne and Some Time Next Year." Her last three major productions can be seen as equalling each other.

There have been a few slow patches in the past, but there again not a lot was happening at the time.

Does she feel strained at all at the way things turned out after *Sweet Charity*?

"People tend to think you should do certain things because they're big starring roles. I don't believe in that. I just love working. I find it boring not to work. Sometimes the smaller roles I've done, like in *Pressure Pressure* and *Pippa*, have been very rewarding."

She does not think about what might have been. "If you get bitter then I think you become boring."

In the play *Time* Nancy doesn't sit waiting for the phone to ring. She goes back to classes and also teaches dancing to children.

"I feel the oddness sometimes," she admits. "But then I give myself a lecture and get myself out again!" At the moment with projects not exactly plentiful, Nancy Hayes is to be discovered again.

She's appearing in Sydney at the National Theatre in Alan de Groot's new

play *Gong House*. She plays the part of Molly who is rather large-limbed — "I have to wear lots of padding, and I eat all night," laughs Nancy. "I have to diet all day, or I'll end up like Molly at the end of the season! With my husband they'll say, can you be ready to do a dancing role in two weeks — a dancing elephant?"

Playing a straight character role in a theatre like *Nursery* is important to Nancy at this stage of her career. She believes actors should never stop learning right through their career. She enthusiastically returns to the musicals to illustrate her point.

"I think it's important for actors to learn to sing and dance, even if they never use it. The Americans particularly do all the classes all over the place and they are an extraordinary facet of theatre. Whereas here, I suppose, because the musical repertoire hasn't been considered a very prestigious thing by many actors, they go — Oh, Musical!"

So then she launches into a great dinner train about the musical overseas and her eyes light up at the mere thought of doing another and another.

Is there another side of Nancy Hayes to be discovered?

"I would like to do a film," says Nancy, "but apart from that nothing."

Her road sense of humour then takes over. "Well, I don't play the violin, I don't think I'd like to do *Sweet Charity* on ice, because we scrub it or pass a tissue. Although if I had to do it for a show I'd say, — I can do that. Then I'd go on and learn!"

That is Nancy Hayes' attitude to theatre and to life. Always say yes and do, even if it does get you into stiff situations.

CONDUCTED & OVERLOOKED

ARMIDALE CARRY-OVER

JAKE NIMBLEY: "Now that I am working here for the HVTC, many people are asking what has happened to the Armidale Project, so may I say right off all that the project was only ever a pilot scheme to last for six months. However there has been a substantial amount of carry-over of activities. The AITP is mounting a one week season of *Oklahoma!* at the MICA Theatre in August and providing its members with work for schools in the New England region. The whole project has in my view been a huge success and I look forward to its renewal and growth in 1986. We shall be producing a full report for the next issue of *Theatre director's*."

VISITOR FOR GORKA

BILL SRIBANAHAN, Administrator for the GM Team: "We are proud to announce the visit of Lene Ceder, apparently one of the world's top five directors, to the Old Town to direct *The Lower Depths* by Gor'kiy in

the Drama Theatre in November.

"He is an architect, set designer, stage and screen actor and director who emerged in the late 1950's as one of the influential new wave of European directors, combining a highly physicalized style with an intellectual and emotional richness. His major work has been to be invited to direct with Horowitz's famed Laocoön Studio, Belgrade Theatre, or a vast range of classical and contemporary works from around the world, and central to the resurgence of innovative theatre in post-war Eastern Europe.

"Foreign parts are familiar to Mr Ceder having performed at a number of West German theatres, and work in North America with Licence and Love for the Arena Stage Washington in 1974 and for Vancouver Canada. One of his *Blue Forest of the Hungry* (1980) gained him the Best Director Prize at the Ottawa International Film Festival. *The Lower Depths* runs for seven weeks from 18 November and will be designed by fellow Russian actress Svetlana Strelina."

HVTC FLAG FLYER

TERENCE CLARKE, Artistic Director HVTC: "The interruption in the activities of the Hunter Valley Theatre Company has thankfully only been short. In the interim the actors have stayed together under separate auspices to present *Men Are Men* at a local theatre restaurant. Now we plan to mount a two-week season under HVTC which will open at Armidale for four days at the break times come to Newcastle for a six and possibly eight week run. Whilst this is going on we can prepare for a massive production to open in late October. Probably this will be presented at our first house the Arts/Drama Theatre at the University. With that in, luncheons and community activities would be a real possibility during the day. Benefit performances at various theatres, with more to come in other major theatres throughout Australia, have been of enormous significance in getting the company back on the road. Surpassed almost \$1500 and a local amateur company (Newcastle

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RIVERINA CRUISING COMPANY

Repertory) has raised over \$900. The money is being put rapidly into ongoing production work, with more towards paying continuing administration costs and finally to help clear the \$16,000 debt.



MRS LAWSON AND MR RAMSAY

ROBIN RAMSAY: "Perusing a short work by Professor Manning Clark, I noticed this description of Henry Lawson's 'An Australian Merlin' — an innocent bush boy and a devil. Looking at Lawson with that Manning Clarkism in mind, it gave the man entirely new and colourful dimensions. As I researched him more and more I realised the inherent possibilities of combining Mr Lawson's writing with Mr Ramsay's performing... and soon I had the basis of what seemed to me an extraordinary show, having odds to keep away from the painful 'mock whip among the wattle' syndrome. I researched his trip to London — his drill observations about the English folk and found very many points in the odder ways — including one poem written by Lawson as a grocery tag to Lya Corin's grocery."

Robin Ramsay's one-man Henry Lawson show *The Standard From the Bush* opens at the Russell Street Theatre, Melbourne on 29 September.

NEW COMPANY'S PACKAGE SHOWS

1988 LEARNS A LOT *Alb. Manager, the Australian Stage Company:* "The Australian Stage Company is a new venture created by a group of professionals who are taking an innovative approach to the production of exciting new theatre."

"The aim is to create packaged shows designed to meet the requirements of touring organisations and thus to provide flexibility without the enormous overheads normally involved. Each production will be built around more professionals and generate its own audience. Yet it is not to be merely set free but precisely channeled vehicles to test and heighten the skills of performers and provide a focal point for the stimulation of further creativity in the Australian theatre."

The founding members are Robyn Archer, Louise Archibald, Wal Cherry, John Gladden, Silver Harris, George Whaley and a business consultant, Fujian Simpson. The first season is to be generated by the Sydney Opera House (trial in the Recording Hall/August 22nd-23rd) and by the Canberra Civic Centre (trial September 12th-13th). The show is

New! The Times, an entertainment based on the works of Rudyard Kipling and Isambard Brunel, compiled by John Waller and directed by Wal Cherry.

"The company will stage works from Australia and overseas in its dedication not to aboriginal but to their potential to excite both audiences and the company too!"

FROM NATIONAL TO INT'L NATIONAL

ALICE WILMIE: Director, National Theatre, Perth, who has a Churchill Fellowship for six months. "After I manage the artistic directorship of the National Theatre, Perth, I will be going to Great Britain in January and I intend to visit as many theatres as I possibly can. The itinerary isn't finalised, but I will certainly be visiting a good many experimental theatres, and talking to their directors. In addition I am particularly interested in the regional theatres, as I feel their problems are probably more similar to ours. I will be looking into how the companies are run — not only young plays, but covering the broad spectrum. And I plan to go to France and Germany and possibly Scandinavia."

SLIPPING THE LIGHT

DAVID REED has been brought to Australia by the Old Tape assigned by the Artspeak Council. His major work has been as lighting designer for the R.S.C. including work with Peter Brook, David Jones and Terry Hands. Five World Theatre Seasons at the Albery have been his responsibility and occasional lighting design for the Moscow Art Theatre and Actors Studio of New York when in London.

"All the lighting designers I have ever known and I include myself say that you cannot teach lighting design. We are probably right but even if it cannot be taught it can be learned. My function for the next year, then, is to assist the variety of students who come to our little hall at Actors. Precise to learn how to change lighting for the theatre."

"There is of course a basic set of rules which can be learned like those which apply to cooking. The art of lighting has something to do with knowing how to build and read the rules and to produce a memorable meal rather than something just to eat."

Castan Bleu cooking courses rarely produce great chefs and lighting courses don't produce great lighting designers but both can produce a person with the ability to succeed and the confidence to fail."

APOLOGY

In the July *Theatre Australia*, "Whingen, Rommerts and Fazza", reference was made to the pre-publicity for *Trovatore's Fortune* in Melbourne. The comment was not intended as a criticism of any individual and if so interpreted it remained with apologies.

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Ray Stanley's

WHISPERS RUMOURS & FACTS



Forrest Stedich — who wrote the screen plays for *High Society* and the forthcoming *Body Count*, has been optioned by Miramax to write a sequel to their *Murder Lautamente* titled *Tow Truckers* and has another script, *Moody*, to be filmed by Ben (Peter) DeJong — tells me it's his intention to write a play for the stage, believing it "to be the form where one can really be oneself." How about one of the television companies commissioning a play from Forrest? — Meanwhile, don't be surprised if David Williamson writes a play for a commercial management.

Still on the subject of playwrights' interests from Steve J. Spero that he play King Richard, set in the future and

workshopped at the recent Playwrights' Conference, has been taken up by the Old Tote. The Standard's production of *Chinese Brothers* by Ron Blair, performed by Peter Carroll, is to be presented by Hopkins in Melbourne next year. With it will be another Blair play, *Prodigy Showmen*, both plays directed by John Bell. Could it follow with Ann Vickie may even act in the latter two benders, which would mark only their second stage appearance in Melbourne?

Lorraine Bayley of the TV serial *The Sailor* may be back on stage again around Christmas time, either in Melbourne or Sydney. And Andrew MacFarlane (John Sullivan) who came out of the serial last year also hopes once again to appear "live." See Ken Shorter in the London cast of the Royal House production of Tennessee Williams' *The Rose Girl* (Globe Theatre, Soho), which has transferred to the Phoenix.

Caroline Cellier and John O'May, taking an overseas trip during a break before their *As You Like It* tour, had auditions to professors in New York and London arranged by Karen Brookfield. As co-star John Geddes will be playing Donny Frazier's imagined in the film as the engineer's life. — John Taylor spending 12 weeks on Papua-New Guinea as consultant to the Papua-New Guinea Dance and Theatre Company immediately be-

comes John will be directing *Gluck's Orpheus and Eurydice* in October.

Reports that Melbourne's Last Laugh Theatre Movement is brewing up a show will feature some members of the RHC Faculty Show from the AFGC. Seats in of Marcy's books have sold records in Melbourne for Michael Bigley International and JK Williamson Productions. Denis Glynn, who was the old JKW company's rep in London, has had such a large success with the Musical Maracas tour in association with Michael Bigley, it's likely he'll be back — in tandem with Michael — presenting other attractions. I've just heard whispers of Romeo Baskin perhaps coming out in a play. Marian Street are following up their success in the weight loss musical area with *Puff* to open their '98 season, perhaps it will follow in the footsteps of *Terrence*, which is just finishing its incredibly successful nationwide tour. They have in fact a very distinctive kind of actress to play the lead.

In the "Whatever Happened To?" Dept.: When Gary Fils played the lead in the MTC's *City Slicker* his name was on the lips of everyone who saw the play, expressing admiration for his performance. One expected him to be snapped up and given some other nice fat roles. But *City Slicker* got a word about him. Where are you Gary? What are you doing?

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Musical Theatre in Australia

The most popular, and subsequently the most financially successful form of theatre in Australia must be the musical comedy. Since the beginning of the century this country has produced, or imported world-class presentations of the best (and sometimes best forgotten) musicals from Broadway and the West End. In fact, since 1989, over 300 musicals have been professionally produced in Australia. Do you know how many of these shows were written by Australians? About 40. And that's the good news! The bad news is that out of these 40 shows, only 12 have been seen in more than one state. And when I find that one of our most popular and frequently revived musicals in Australia *Grease* — it boggles the mind. So why is it, when we have a seemingly insatiable appetite for straight plays, that we can't turn out a *My Fair Lady*-type musical hit? If I know the answer to that question, I'd be writing the show instead of this article, but at least we can cheer ourselves up by looking at what has been accomplished.

1934 was the year that it all started. After 20 years of imported musical theatre, a producer named F.W. Thring (Frank's father) came into theatrical management, leaving the Phoenix Theatre in Melbourne and the New South in Sydney, and presenting the first All Australian musical, *Clouds* starring the one-and-only George Moncrieff. With a book by T.S. Sturt (arr.), restored almost as it was in NSW, and songs mostly by Harry Mandel, the producer also boasted Australia's first revolving stage, which contributed much amusement to the show over the use of horses to walk on without falling over. *Clouds* was played in packed houses chiefly because of Miss Moncrieff and the talented cast, which included Robert Chisholm, George Wallace, Claude Flavelle (who also directed) and Marshall Craddy. Having set the precedent, F.W. Thring engaged Miss Moncrieff for his next project, another Australian musical, *The Under Tree* in 1935. Thring was to present only one more show, *Master of Peers* starring Alice Delysia, before his death in 1936.

Munrohala, J C Williamson's son, as he could, secured the services of Midge Eliot and Cyril Ritchard and staged after *Mountain Melody*, with a quote by Charles Azar, who had also contributed songs to *Cobbs*. Incredibly none of these shows was a success of any proportion for any would-be writers, as we were not to see another major group musical for twenty years.

So we went back to the ponds of
western Lake Superior with imported men

Harry Langdon and Robert Coote in *Anything Goes* (1936), Milton Mason and Karen Rosalie as *J. Mervin's Angel* (1937), Australian Dens Need and Maxie LaMarre in *Let's Face It!* (1942), Cindy Courtenay and Charles Walters in *Under the Counter* (1946), Oklahoma! with Robert Rausch and Carolyn Adler (1958). *Brigadoon* with Ken Landis and Grace George (1959) and many more. One J.C.W. production of note — in 1947, Jenny Howard was announced as the star of the new American musical *Seven Go to Heaven*, but something went awry between the lady and her contract as the role went to a young American girl who had been living in Australia for eight years. Apart from making *King Hayes* wider, Australia had important benefits, not providing a vehicle for such proven talents as Neddy Hayes, Tom Lamey, Bessie Gwynne, Odette Dowd (O'Dowd) and, interestingly, in Adelaide, English actress Dorothy Vernon.

Mangat, back in the building, suggested by our new-existent musical theatre scene, a client named Eddie Sarsfield wrote a show called *The Righteousness With American performer Carl Sandall* willing to direct the property. Sarsfield made a tentative deal with PCW, but the Taxis stalled for so long that Sarsfield and Sandall booked the recently unemployed *Anna Get Your Gun* chorus and a cast including the popular comedian Charles Norman, and mounted the musical at the King's Theatre in Melbourne, opening in 1930. The show was unanimously panned by the critics particularly the *Ast*. I think a greater Aboriginal contribution — which naturally brought the house down

EMI bought enough of the songs to record an album seven years later, leaving on a lengthy sabbatical. In a very ambitious project, *Rocky River* was unique in that it had a plot written around the songs, rather than the other way around. After these successos, plot lines had been discarded, Dick Diamond concentrated a study about a group ofobituaries on a station in the 1960s after the teenagers' strike. The songs are all traditional and can be replaced at the producer's whim, with the exception of the title song based on Henry Lawson's words, and Helen Palmer's "Ballad of Bush". The show premiered at Melbourne's New Theatre in 1953 and was subsequently seen in all capital cities.

Lola Abbott by Alan Black, opened at a "try-out" production at the Almanac Theatre in Melbourne in 1958. Set in Madrid in 1855, the play concerns the famous Spanish dancer who comes to town at the peak of its gold fever and disappears forever with her Spanish Dancer. The combination of Broadway musical type singing and older dialogue was a trifle unsettling, but the score, by Peter Benjamin and Paul Stannard, included our first hit duet, "Somewhere Only We Know," introduced by Noel Harrison, and other songs ranging from poetry dreadful in very good taste. When the 1959 Revival at the Shaftesbury Theatre in a full-scale version, the chief mistake was casting English dancer Mary Preston as Lola, as she was too young for the role and a less than brilliant singer. Lola Abbott closed at a loss of £20,581. A scheduled revival at the Independent Theatre in 1973 featuring Steve Brodsky, Barry Gibson and Paul Corrall might well have given the show a new lease of life had the production ever opened.

Although Albert Atiles conceived *The Sonoran*, R. B. George Johnson was to write the original script, but dropped out of the project because of prior commitment; the show was not to reach the stage until 1962, when it was presented for a week at Caribbean's (Albert Hall) Sun Frost Tap and John McCallum, the host, performed in and announced



for a professional production to play a six-week season at Melbourne's Comedy Theatre. The six weeks turned into five months, followed by a nine-month tour which grossed over \$250,000. The show has continued its success over the years and recently on ABC-TV in 1976, starring Graeme Blundell, Geraldine Turner and Nancys Hayes, and the Arden/Lloyd Thespians/Nancy Brown collaboration is probably our most well known musical.

Two more shows have had Australian history as inspiration. The first, *The Devil of Angels' Ashes* (1962), by television writer Jaff Uderhill and Bruce George, deals with the 'post-war' years of the 1950s. A great artistic success in its first production at the Union, starring Kevin Cahoon, Mary Hardin, Reg Livermore and Marion Edward, Angel's Valley broke no box office records, but positive reviews indicate the show's continued popularity. A film, the originally titled *Everybody's Happy*, from New Zealanders was the inaugural production at the QFC in 1970, the central character being Governor Lachlan Macquarie. The Rob Ingle-Robin Wood musical has not been seen outside of Queensland to date.

In recent years, the musical theatre in Australia has prospered greatly, due to the efforts of a small group of people who



Madge Elliot in *Mild My Home* (1932)

have undertaken to follow and encourage their successors.

Don Bellye and Peter Price have a list of credits as long as your arm, but only a small percentage of the public can claim to

know their work. The Melbourne based writing team enjoyed their first success in the early fifties with *A Family of Ruffians* and *It Happened in Tampico*, a spin-off Hollywood smash of the 40s *Tampanella* reappeared some years later in a revised version under the title *Real White and Rosy* (starring Pamela Colman as Viva Condole) a Broadway success start. Their next project, *Caviller*, conceived by Louis Blane who also played the lead role of Caroline Chisholm, was produced at St Martins Theatre in 1971 with the assistance of a \$40,000 special projects grant from Sir Henry Banks Sweet Fanny Adams, their last full-scale musical to date, played a successful season at Melbourne's La Chat Noir Theatre Restaurant. Set in the 1930s and dealing with the rivalry between two brothers, Kip Long and Fatty Adams, the frequent double entendres and unusually tuneful songs provided perfect entertainment for the discriminating audience. But it seems the Poms and Brits have not come to care for one type of audience, these songs have embraced many styles and periods, making them the most versatile and prolific musical comedy writers in the country.

William Orr, in his capacity as producer/director, has made a notable



Left: Eric Philips as Aeneas; Above: Edwin Rees and Rosemary Butler as The Duke and Dorcas

contribution by commissioning, and sometimes adapting, musicals based on established properties. Eleanor Wateridge and John McPhail's *Musical Man*, based on The Music with Bits and pieces from four other Melville comedies, was commissioned as a vehicle for Gordon Chater and Sheila Brailey. The music, by De Moresco, was modern and typically 'British comedy'. Ten years later, *When We Are Married*, based on J.B. Priestley's comedy, was created for the talents of Johnny Lockwood and Jill Perryman, and the songs by Tommy Crighton and Alan Silson were once again in the modern idiom. I doubt that Bill Oberst's author of those shows, with dreams of a ten year success. Both shows were revised specifically for the amateur Phillips St. theatres, and besides, 'rehearsals' are not designed for rehearsals! They are designed for barns or stalls. However, at least Mr. Oberst has demonstrated that a show need not be particularly Australian to be an Australian musical.

The Federal Theatre, once again, has enjoyed great success with musical plays, particularly Ron Blair's *Fool's Day*,

1971 (1973) with music by Terry Clarke and Charles Cobden (had the score based on traditional songs), and *Womble the Fox* by Bradley, Blane, Conroy, Hand & O'Donnell. The Womble shows in little more than a string of silly, bawdily-pops and pretty songs with banal lyrics, held together by a terrible score, hasn't a producer. Frequently, and most successfully throughout the country, *Fool's Day*, on the other hand, is quite serious stuff, with a host of wonderfully witty characters to reduce the difficult plot, and some beautifying songs to boot!

Of course there have been other Australian regurgitations of such British Cycle 4 Standards, Reg. Livermore's *Jasmine*, the rest of the Arden-Thompson-Brown collection — including *Girl From the Tower* and *Marriage Are Made In Heaven* — John Howard's *Reckonings* — a plethora of rock operas such as the ill-fated *Nuclear, Hormone and Men of Tomorrow* (but I said there will all of them And what of the unproduced shows waiting in the wings? Livermore's *Not Left*), David Mitchell's musical biographies of Lily Langtry and Bea

Metie, Tim Gidցing's *Rock-Ole?* Maybe one of these will travel overseas and become another *Chorus Line*. When performers such as John D May, John Douglas, Leanne Mann and Ron Chisholm are forced to write their own shows simply because nobody else will, that could mean we will lose those people to the more creative climates of England and the U.S. And if the Australian musical theatre has produced anything of importance, our performers must hold the baton.

So why should they be out here reproducing Broadway musicals when they can be in New York doing the real thing? The best we can do is try to keep them here with more home-grown material. Whether the Music Theatre Forum earlier this year was just a bunch of people needing safety and security being sheltered just to be in the same room, or Stephen Sondheim, at whether it was a valid and educational conference that will produce tangible results remains to be seen. The musical theatre in Australia cannot nor be dismissed as hopeless, we've come this far — a world is ripe to show we've learned something from our mistakes.



Ken Shilton and company in *Laurinet* (1971). Old Town Theatre Company

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The Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education is situated in Toowoomba, a city of 17,000 people just on the western edge of the Great Dividing Range at an elevation of 450 metres. It has good primary, secondary and tertiary education facilities, extensive shopping and commercial facilities and is within a few hours driving time of Brisbane, the Gold Coast, the Sunshine Coast and various mountain resorts.

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STAFF 1978 (THEATRE)

Appointments are made from experienced theatre professionals or teachers in the following performing arts areas:

SENIOR LECTURER/LECTURER — TECHNIQUES OF ACTING (Ref No 95/62)

This appointment will be made to cover all classes in acting and movement from first to third year and applicants should have extensive experience in the presentation of semi-professional theatre in addition to the appropriate teaching qualifications. The appointee will also be required to make a substantial contribution to the public performing activities of the department and will be encouraged to accept invitations to work in the Darling Downs region and other places on opportunity arises. Some experience in television does go would be an advantage.

LECTURER — THEATRE DESIGN (Ref No 95/64)

This appointment will be made to cover the following areas of stage and costume design, group setting, model making and programme and poster layout for technical students from first to third year. The appointee will also be expected to contribute to the public performing activities of the Department and will be encouraged to work in the Darling Downs region and other places on opportunity arises. Some experience in television does go would be an advantage.

INSTRUCTOR — STAGE MANAGEMENT TECHNIQUES (Ref No 95/63)

This appointee will assist in the training of all stage management and technical students within the Department and will mainly be responsible for the technical staging of all departmental productions. The appointee will also accompany Departmental touring groups where necessary and will be responsible for supervising students in all areas concerned with stage management.

INSTRUCTOR — VOICE AND SPEECH IN THEATRE/RADIO (Ref No 95/65)

The Department proposes to develop in the area of media and the subsequent area of performing arts students in the areas of radio and television and cinema. The appointee will preferably be responsible for instruction in voice in the theatre; however, some experience in radio or television would be an advantage.

References

Senior Lecturer I	321-125-033 804 pm
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Lecturer II	321-306-518 420 pm
Lecturer III	321-306-514 100 pm
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Instructor Div II	321-299-511 312 pm

Applications, indicating the names of two professional referees, should be submitted by 26th October 1977 to:

The Personnel Officer,
Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education,
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The First National Young Playwrights' Weekend

To observe the expressive and creative ability of young people is galvanised or spurred. Unlike young musicians, young writers have few outlets for encouragement or training. This is especially true in the field of dramatic writing where subsidised theatres, the film industry and television give so priority at all to development of young writing talent. The Shopfront Theatre for Young People, in Carlton, Sydney, has recognised the need and takes a lead by holding the first National Young Playwrights' Weekend. One comment during the Weekend was, "This is more significant than the National Playwrights' Conference, because these are the writers of the plays there now. There are over 30 writers being encouraged here — far a fraction of the cost of the adult conference."

In fact, 25 young writers applied with scripts and all were accepted. The Shopfront Theatre believes that creative activity should not be competitive or static. This attitude is fostered in all the work done at the Theatre — no auditions are held, plays grow from the experiences and abilities of these young people who come along. The work of the Theatre is considerably planned for its resonance and strength just as the plays selected for the Young Playwrights' Weekend were found to be of very high standard despite the rejection of any selection procedure. The young writers, aged between 10 and 26 came from all over Australia and stayed at the large house that is part of The Shopfront Theatre complex.

A large variety of sessions run by professional writers, actors and directors filled all the spaces of the Theatre. The among rooms housed a radio scripting workshop, the members of Women Action Theatre talked about group creation and site-specific writing in the drama studio, a director and actors held a production workshop in the theatre. Peter Lorna chose to present a meeting with his group, Seven Squares, and discussed with his young group in the common room in front of the fire. The drama room was used for sound to record the sessions held there. Jill Morris was making a video tape of a paged play on the front lawn, the free theatre group performed a play about refresh at the Carlton railway

Jill McNicholl, who knows a lot of genres, not all of them good, but as the National Young Playwrights' Weekend I have been happily assisted to learn of the talent being encouraged in young people at The Shopfront Theatre for Young People.

I used to stand in Roxy's Playwrights. I was chairman for several open meetings, that I was to read and discuss plays written by 16-year old students and teenagers. My pleasant surprise was on the day, my cynicism on the way out.

I read a play by a seventeen-year old girl — her first attempt — that was every bit as good as, if not superior to, some plays I've seen performed in major theatres. I read a play by a ten-year old boy that had no punctuation, rolling stones in dyslexia, only four pages of it, but in those pages showing such imaginative talent as to convince me I had to hand wrongs in art.

One of the best and most surprising weekends I have ever known. That's the story may be disputed the last five days. And it is wonderful to know that I have been able to assist and advise some of Australia's best young playwrights.

For that is what these kids are. And I sincerely hope that the dedication of local May, Gary Fey and Grahame Dalton and their children themselves, will not go unrecognised or unanswered in the future.

Long live The Shopfront Theatre for Young People!

Station and tried to join away garbage to the football crowd; Jim McNaughton half a night on the office typewriter rewarding a script with a 17 year old writer.

The Weekend was three and a half days of intensive learning for the young writers. For many of them it was the first time their writing had been treated with respect and admiration — and the boost to their self-confidence was enhanced by the fact that the place was visiting from some of Australia's top professional theatre people. The public ring was strongly stimulated with each session being followed by a break where questions could be continued individually or other writers could be sought out. In the way even the most wary became important learning resources. Each young writer was placed in groups suited to their

dramatic flavours and also in groups that broadened their writing experience. Most of the groups were small but occasional large, often sessions were held. Practical work was done also — the stage theatre, the paged play. Margaret Kelly took a group to see some filming after they had read the script. Max Collier organised a rehearsed reading of a short play. Matthew O'Sullivan and Malcolm Kerr ran improvisations around some of the plays, the end groups marked with Max's Beaton prepared tapes with the Theatre's sound equipment. Tape recorders and video equipment were available all through the Weekend.

Theatre performances also played an important part in the Weekend. On the first night The Shopfront Theatre gave an open rehearsal of *The Madhouse* — a play written by David Thomson, one of the young writers attending. Everyone wanted National Theatre to see *Giving Home* by Alannah Green and discussed the play with Richard Winterton afterwards. Canberra Children's Chorus performed their group-created play *Face To Face*. It was produced by Errol Bray, 16 of the young writers built and performed a short play. On the final night some of the young writers performed *The Midwife* by Helen Biggs, a 14 year old writer at the Weekend. A video tape of Margaret Kelly's television play, *Big in Pink*, was played over and over by the TV television. Other performances have already been mentioned — in fact, the idea of performance was a central theme for the Weekend. The professionals stressed that dramatic writing had to be performed live and forearm and the young writers kept asking where they could get their work performed or even workshopped. Unfortunately, the representatives from the QM Tote Theatre, National Theatre, the Australian Film and Television School, the Literary Board and the professional writers themselves could offer little hope for special attention being given to young writers' work in the various subsidised theatres in Sydney. The best chance seemed to be with a few youth theatre groups in Melbourne and Sydney who could not offer professional salaries for the job. This writing which was called "where to now?" ended the Weekend on a

slightly depressing, even for it became clear just how little was being done in Australia to help young drama writers.

One of the most gratifying aspects of the Weekend was that the professional writers who had approached treated the young writers with respect and courtesy and many felt that they themselves had experienced an important event in their own development. But Michael found in visiting the young writers as students, professional and was a source of encouragement and inspiration. He was constantly reading scripts, editing, advising. Although each professional had been given a couple of scripts to read most insisted on reading every play they could get hold of. Plays circulated amongst the young writers too and this created a very special atmosphere of closeness and understanding. For everyone had a previous prior of work under scrutiny. The older writers who attended on "Visions" were Margaret Kelly, Peter Keane, Steve Spurin, Alan Barrie, Shira Basman, Jill Morris, Bernay Latza, Richard Bradburn, Harold Landis, John Sampson, and members of Western Australian Theatre. The directors and actors were Matthew O'Sullivan, Matt Galton, Julie Drayton, Malcolm Koch, James Elliott and Chris Haywood.

It was exciting to find close relationships forming between the senior writers and their young counterparts. Jim McNeil claims he has found a girl who "writes Macbeth as well as Macbeth". Peter Keane has asked the Theatre to pass on to him scripts by two young writers whom, until his recently held "Visions" O'Sullivan has offered to co-produce special one night scripts by a young Queenslander. Margaret Kelly was there for the whole three days and is now seeking out production possibilities for a few scripts. The enthusiasm of both Steve Spurin and Jill Morris made them particularly popular with the younger ladies and Alan. There must have been some fun right — he could only take one session but it lasted a琉璃two and a half hours. In fact, at the risk of seeming sentimental, the gathering was generally agreed to be the happiest and friendliest group of adults anyone there had experienced. The tendency of the professionals to accept and respect the kids

MARGARET KELLY: When I was first asked to volunteer to talk about television writing at a Young Playwrights' Weekend I did so with a feeling of trepidation. I was giving up my time to talk to a bunch of kids. Now, at the end of the Weekend, my feelings have changed drastically. I have tried so much that registered about my own writing. I have also learnt that there's a whole crop of young writers around who at a few points will probably be taking my job. My only complaint about the weekend is that it didn't last long enough. Next time make it longer. And small more tokens or prizes for us.

allowed an atmosphere of strong attachment and co-operation to develop.

On the practical side — the Literature Board of the Australian Council gave The Shepherd Theatre a grant of \$1,450 to run the Weekend. This was to cover professional fees, food, fare for young writers where needed, administration costs and so on. Many of the professionals were able to offer their services free. The only charge to the young writers was a contribution of \$5 towards food. The air fares of the South Australians were paid by their Education Department.

Apart from the continuing contact soon of the writer-women have arranged with the kids a number of other follow-up ideas come out of the Weekend. The Shepherd Theatre plans to produce two of the plays, by Sydney writers so that they can be involved in the production process. The whole Sydney contingent has agreed to come once a month for discussions, and some will be coming to the Theatre as a weekly basis. The Theatre has offered to act as a clearing house for future scripts and some of the professionals will help find casting for the plays. The Theatre is also planning to publish a collection of the plays from the Weekend in magazine format and this will be promoted through youth theatres and schools. The Theatre's magazine, *Reverb*, regularly publishes short plays by kids and is another outlet for writers. Video tapes and sound tapes of sessions held at the Weekend will also be available for interested groups to purchase at cost price. Naturally we hope that the success of this Weekend will make

it an annual event, and the Theatre intends to seek funds for a 1978 Weekend.

Perhaps the full impact of the gathering will not be felt for some years, but its immediate value to the young writers themselves was immeasurable. All young people need encouragement and respect for their creative endeavours, and the National Young Playwrights' Weekend certainly gave this. It was a great success and hopefully a great beginning.

ANTHONY FUNNELL: 12, Breckon. I think the weekend was useful to my writing career, because we discussed our plays with professional writers. But I think it is big shame that there are not more of these sort of groups.

JULIANNE WATTS: 17, Adelade. The National Young Playwrights' Weekend has succeeded in filling a gap previously ignored by the majority of adults. For young writers are taken seriously and given honest criticism. To work with the people we have worked with is rewarding. The stimulation and enthusiasm is令人鼓舞. We are given from you what you present a script. All the professional writers have been eager to read and discuss any written work. This way all the young writers here can be shown faults in their writing and how to avoid traps in the future. It's about time young Australian writers were given a chance. We have been recognised and it'll be our names you'll be reading on the credits in the future.

JOHN TURNBULL: 17, Sydney. The Young Playwrights' Weekend made me aware of the difficulties confronting young Australian playwrights in getting their plays produced and was achieved by the literature board of Australia. Apart from the general encouragement, each young playwright was given the opportunity to work with professionals in that particular field of expertise. Also we were given the chance to work with professionals in other media related to theatre.

My only real complaint was the lack of facilities, but the workshop showed the need for such groups as The Shepherd Theatre.

SWEENEY AGONISTE

David Marr

Stories about Sweeney put him at the centre of a running vaudeville: Sweeney's days at the races, Sweeney's parties, Sweeney the Coca Cola bottler of the North downing his Dom Perignon, Sweeney the only

man alive to tip the headwriter at Chequers as he's thrown out, Sweeney the friend and co-conspirator of Billie, Sweeney the post passing the dooms-locked Anne Sweeny. A big dollar man (like wroth) a unhappy place; Who brought up Broadwick with a tax or a bribe.

To see the pulled bell boy smile, or please

The man who supplied non-alcohol
Pilates, Under my father,
His mouth a liturgy
Of grace. Like a gangster, his wallet is
broken.
Sweeney who brings it up himself just
Was his ungrateful mother of grace, gone
Was his sonned up father at 17
But reflective Sweeney at 61 looks so

Lord Lord! How you leave off! How you
end up men!
Leave them walking on the garden
pathways,

Stacking in the turned-up, used-up
Pilates death and what death means
Sweeney from time to live with a companion
In his bottom hole introducing the older
To the cable, Sweeney who flew through
the bookshop...

He's got a fine head with brown grey
hair drawn back from a big forehead, and
a face that belies and charms in seductive
alternance. It's somehow a Queensland
face — a bit like Jack Palance, with
scratches of Billie Peters in it, though
less hardened.

He arrived for the interview in a three
piece suit of fine broadcloth check, a



amped on and blood-red curtains. He was determined to organise a bit of colour around himself but attempts to get away from the standard theatre was disastrous. Within minutes of ordering drinks an old friend at the press was across the bar, "Just to thank you for that, Brian."

"A swashbuckling man," said the stranger to me with effort of memory and emphasis. "The king of bloody Broadway."

Brian Sweeney and theatre administration came together with Twelfth Night Theatre in Brisbane. He was one of the co-founders of businesses John Whitley put together to back the new project in 1985. He joined us board, raised money, and with a lot of his own money and a money partnership from the Korda Continuum of the Sweeney family.

"I've just a high class soft drink salesman," he says. And his business links include the Korda brand, and Coca Cola whose franchise he has to bottle and sell between Rockhampton and Townsville. In fact, the whole of the North, but it's enough.

At the Melbourne Cup in 1994 Whitley asked Sweeney of help care to put the Australia Council and Sweeney — who says he's never been a member of a political party, and values how it matches him — took his place on the Council in July 1995. In July this year Fisher appointed him Chairman of the Theatre Board to succeed John Manly.

Sweeney doesn't carry any of Manly's beliefs that there are more necessary arts for any sort of cultural viability. "Lame," he said rather grandly, "are subsidies when you receive them."

"I'm committed to excellence, of course I am. I'm a hierarchical sort of person. I believe some people have more talent than others, and finding talent is like fishing out — leading a star creature."

"But I'm committed to equity. We must have amateurs and we must be sensitive to the needs of small companies. I support that as only justified with finite money. But we depend on the big professional organisations. To a man, who's going to put in the Old Tote, the National, the MTC."

Sweeney may not be very powerful. His appointment is for two years rather than the usual four. He doesn't have a hall of fame in art about theatre in Australia, and he and Alan Edwards were once close but observers round the Australia Council's headquarters in March Sydney say that some evidence has set in between them lately.

That's the sense of the general order of things: the fine expression he goes in short of a position just coming on a bit strong. It's a position many veterans on closer acquaintance, Sweeney respects loyalty in some, but not without concern. "I don't know how many, I've got, but it must be plenty. If you haven't got interests you don't deserve friends."

John Kilian is one friend, an assessment of many Sweeney partisans at the old Queensland house at Bulimba they frequented Hamilton. There's lots of Mr Ministering going on among the guests when Kilian

calls. Asked about other political friends there's a sudden guffaw. "I know a lot of politicians, they're pretty interesting folks too."

Sweeney has a reputation for being able to get money out of private business to back the arts. In the present arts political atmosphere it's the best claim a contender for this sort of office can make. He began with the Twelfth Night Theatre appeal (\$250,000) and says he's still at it, but won't name names of companies that he's recently begged money out of. "We have managed to get a few backs down here and there. I've had some success and I'm working on a few."

The only qualification for the job Sweeney claims for himself is to be "a can opener" of thearts. Cyril Richard in Sydney Xpert was one of the great theatre impresarios for him. Others on his short list are the first producer of Pippin (Huang) in New York with Lisa Hayes in Manila, Nancayo Hayes ("the best") playing Cabaret in Perth, Alan Edwards in Tasmania and a night of "unrehearsed sympathy" between an Irish audience and Irish cast when he took his family to the Abbey to see The Plough and the Stars.

"You not prepared to tell the board what to do," said Sweeney going over his plan. "But it would be a good thing for the Australian public if there were more touring — the MTC to Broome way, and the Like in Adelaide and Perth. I'd like to see the companies come along to the Theatre Board with positive requests for funds for touring to capital cities."

He doesn't know if odd members of theatre companies working through the Council to keep structure costs out of town, are true or not. If true, he says, they should have. There's no need for it. They aren't going to copy each other's production. There's no reason, he argues, that a good production in Melbourne shouldn't be seen in Adelaide and Sydney. And if the Ethelredon Trust has been looking after these tours in the past, that's only a formal difficulty to his plan. "Negotiations between the Council and the Trust are proceeding."

Sweeney calls himself as a nationalist and apolitical Australian playwrighting he feels has a documentary dryness about it at the moment, but he admires Peter Keleghan ("that's a good play of his, *West God!*") and David Williamson. "Williamson is the one with the big chance — and obviously I'm talking about them as a world playwright, especially we don't talk in the narrow sense. He's got to succeed in the English speaking world, in the world."

Sweeney is also a theorist, a race horse owner, a collector and (the private distribution only) poet. "I didn't make it as a creative poet, and that's devastating. I tried a lot many years ago, but I didn't make it. There are more aspiring poets in the country than race horses."

He's that rare who reads three or four books at a time, "always reading Chardin" and when we spoke was also taking in Margaret Mead ("again"), Philip Larkin and Longfellow's *Poems of the Sword*. He

definitely likes and is devoted to T S Eliot.

But, he says, is the only game the Americans have produced. He's up there in Sweeney's galaxy with Gribble and Moncrieff. And talking of Eliot reminds Sweeney of an anecdote about a manuscript of his, a professor at Harvard, who was visiting London and asked Eliot what theatre he should see while he was there. Should he see *Love's Labour's Lost*? "My company prohibited that," replied Eliot sharply. "Not with my agreement. It'll never you'll find and see a play by a little known American playwright called *The Senator of the Seven-year-old Ball*." Sweeney wonders, as he adds to the anecdote of his tour passes the entertainment on to Lester.

Oddly, for the collector of people, he's not east Lester. It won't be long. He would never to forget a name or face, and tell people years later the place and date they first met. And it's at the track he makes great observations: every "warm people" the racing crowd.

There's a sudden alertness of purpose in his voice as he talks about the track. "The trouble is the people at the race don't get mixed up with the gamblers, and vice versa. The track is building for an audience. We're down from three percent to one percent, and I'd say even the theatre is bigger than one percent. Mind you, we're much more out of our depth because people keep on betting. But they're older racing and disease germs don't work. People come in not the great event, to see great horses and great stars."

In Sydney Tommy Smith is running a parking lot for him, a front that "wouldn't be bettered" by Chapman out of the *Fifth He's called a March to Glory*.

It's said that if Sweeney learns about someone who appeals to him he'll set out to find them. He read Anne Sexton's work and made it his business to find her. She became more than an addition to his encyclopedic imagination, however, he says, "something different" before her suicide last year.

"She was a good gal of mine. She was so honest, the honesty of the woman and the tragedy. She was right to the bone, writing things before anyone was saying them. And she had a great devotion to God. She said, 'The flesh does not lie.' But I say, 'There are no answers in the flesh.'

Sweeney is a man who speaks his mind, not so much wearing his heart on his sleeve as his brains off over his stomach. He's anxious not to be thought a fool, not to be sound superficial, but this loquacious broad kind of art is going to engage the rest in some sticky reflections around the Australia Council. He has enthusiasm, he reflects himself, he doesn't fit the categories. That's not what they like in the Council.

He has an old saying that is passed to "let the hand out for a fly". A couple of years with the Theatre Board will give him every chance for that. But, if things don't go so well there's another Sweeney saying for the Chairman to fall back on. "I don't give a fuck, what people think of me."

Part One

The Hunter Valley Theatre Company



How and Why

Tony Trench

The history of the formation of the Hunter Valley Theatre Company can be told briefly

simply — but a straight recounting of the facts gives little indication of the problems encountered, any one of which could have resulted in the project being stillborn.

The idea was the brain-child of two staff members of the Arts Council of Australia (NSW Division) — John Tolson, then the Council's Artistic Advisor, and myself, the Administrator. The Executive Committee approved our plan to encourage the formation of a professional regional Drama company somewhere in NSW, and the rest was up to us. We looked at two areas — Orange, in the Central West, where a Civic Theatre was being built, and Newcastle in the Hunter Valley, the State's second largest city. The deciding factor in favour of Newcastle was the involvement in the project, early in 1974, of Mr Bernd Hartel, then the Chairman of the Just Coal Board.

During the ensuing two years we proceeded in a very haphazard fashion towards our goal, making frequent trips between Sydney and Newcastle, talking to interested people, and generally trying to involve as many members of the community as possible. The two major hurdles which we had to overcome were the lack of a suitable theatre in Newcastle, and the

lack of funds (show me a theater company which has enough money).

In 1975 Anthony King, Senior Lecturer in the Department of Adult Education at Sydney University, was recruited to the project, and he was able to obtain a grant deal from time in Newcastle when we were very soon he had successfully negotiated with the University for the use of their Arts/Drama Theatre, and with the Area Office of the Department of Education for a dilapidated High School building as office/rehearsal and working space, both rent-free. And with financial backing from the Coal Board and other local interests, and the appointment of Terence Clarke as Artistic Director, the company opened its doors to the public in March 1976 with John Mogram's *The Floating World*.

All fairly straightforward, or where were the problems?

Fundly, the matter of finding a permanent home for the company was not resolved by Tony King's negotiations with the university — it represented a stop-gap arrangement which led to problems facing the company ultimately to quit the theatre at the end of the first season. The university required the use of the building for lectures during the day, frequently causing



in the company being unable to gain assistance for those rehearsals and set-ups. The decision to see the theatre was a compromise because we realised from the outset that the location of the campus on the outskirts of Newcastle would be a deterrent to people without private transport. In addition, we considered that there would be a resistance among many people to going to a country theatre. However, in view of the delays that had occurred up to that time, we considered that it would be better to accept the university's offer, rather than let the whole project run out of steam.

During our search for a suitable venue and thing became very apparent — grainy, polluted, industrialised Newcastle has some beautiful old buildings. And with the converted theatres at the old Newcastle station we had high hopes that at least one of these old buildings would be available, and suitable. But this was not the case. One building which did come up for consideration led to the only major difference of opinion between the Arts Council and Coal Board (and hence the steering committee). The Hunter Theatre had, for many years been the only venue in Newcastle for touring professional shows. A solid, 100-seater hall, it was never much loved by Newcastleans, and in fact the Civic Theatre was equipped by the City Council for live presentations. The Hunter did have varied drama, apart from occasional film screenings. It was offered for sale and the Coal Board representatives, after prodding on a "People's Theatre", were keen to buy. We vigorously opposed such a move, having vision of the company being swelled with a provincial horde in red down-south. The result was that the Coal Board did not buy the building but the episode produced a schism between the two components of the committee which led to the company moving out on a northwards to the city areas which would have been ideal for conversion. It is ironic that the company leased the Hunter Theatre for six 1977 seasons, and considered all the problems we had foreseen. Now, in mid-1977, the problem of a permanent performing space remains.

Funding was another problem in the formation period. Listed was a sum of security by the Chairman's resources that limited reliance on Newcastle would soon go well. And so our other establishments' problems were solved, we found in late 1975 that the economics climate had changed dramatically from early 1974. No longer were large commercial interests prepared to make significant contributions to the HFTC. NBN (Channel 9), the commercial radio stations and the local newspapers were prepared to give assistance in kind, and happily both State and Federal government agencies made special allocations to the community side of its existence. But the Newcastle City Council, which could reasonably have been expected to help in some way, gave neither financial assistance, nor help with a building, in spite of being the largest landholder in Newcastle.

The other organisation which could have been expected to give assistance — morally if not financially — was the project's neighbour, the Arts Council of NSW. Although initial approval was given for John Taylor and I to carry out our investigation, there was a singular lack of enthusiasm from many members, while others were actively opposed to it. This was particularly depressing in view of the fact that the Arts Council had co-produced with the Sydney Opera House Trust to produce a report *Concerning the Performing Arts in NSW* which advocated that the State could support its small theatre companies in areas outside Sydney. In addition it was envisaged that the Hunter Valley Theatre Company (as named because it was designed to serve the whole region, not Newcastle alone) would take over a part of the Arts Council's role in this area. But the company has not turned outside Newcastle since its first production, except to schools and clubs.



Frayed Shoestring

Terence Clarke,
Artistic Director

SHOESTRING — NEWCASTLE is the telegraphic address of the Hunter Valley Theatre Company which is, at the time of writing, in recess until 14 August. By the time this article appears on future should be clearer, and I hope we shall be in production again.

Our troubles began from inadequate funding and lack of a suitable theatre or performance space; some would add a third cause, the wrong artistic policy; others a fourth, the wrong structure for a regional professional theatre company (Q Theatre in the Western Suburbs of Sydney is successfully running as a co-operative).

It is impossible in 1977 to run a regional professional theatre company on a shoestring. That is a fact that must be faced by anyone trying to start one up, and by the major funding bodies whose policies include — in the words of the Australia Council's Theatre Board drama policy — "the progressive development of regional based drama companies". If this is to be more than a well-intended gesture to



regional theatre it will have to be backed by substantial funding. Far, however, theatre outside capital cities costs more. There are no prerequisites for entry in the regions, no art commercial lies, twice over, TV and radio work — which is often subsidised low-roads, and stable actors, in turn, to subsidise companies at their most difficult years. The smaller regional populations mean lower potential ticket-givers and hence less money from box office sales, particularly in the initial years. Local councils, unlike their English and European counterparts, do not yet accept a responsibility for the performing arts (though Q Theatre has made some headway with their local councils, and we have a tax on the door), they must eventually accept this along with their responsibility for libraries, art galleries, parks, parks, and so on. If only for the reason that of the \$220,000 maximum funding federal and state grants, 25% or more remains in the regions, generates jobs, and helps stimulate local business. Commanding the councils of that will be a slow process, however.

We are grateful for grants from the Australia Council (\$77,320,000) and the NSW Division of Cultural Activities (\$28,000) which saw us through for a company in its second year. Unfortunately, our budgeting for the year was very tight and made no allowance for a loss. It also assumed a reasonable performance space in town which we still have not found. Last year we were 10km out of town on the university campus, without the university's generous support we could never have started. We were forced in January with the choice of leasing the Hunter Theatre which seats about 1000, or delaying a start until suitable premises were found. We decided to take a risk with the Hunter in order to keep faith with our 1200 members (annual fee \$10) and to fulfil the terms of our grants.

It was a wildly un-economic move, bringing greatly increased costs in all areas of production and front of house, and to our dismay our first play, *When The Burke Saw*, drew less than last year's average audience. Our second show, a double bill of *The Last Dicky Show* and *The Big Murphy Show* under the title *Spooning Double*, toured local clubs in Newcastle and Maitland and earned local favourable

entertainer and singer John Davies Douglas an excellent production by guest director John Davies. Excellent reviews ("I've had a night in the theatre or you would find anywhere" said Bruce Blood in *The Advertiser*, the best publicity we had had) and what arrived to us the happy conclusion of Newcastle's three main performances — sport, TV, and the clubs — in full dominion, playing to less than 700 people over four weeks. We struck trouble with the threat of a legal injunction from a member of the Darcy family, and there is no doubt that this did us a lot of harm. Together our first two productions lost \$22,000 by the time we came to know the writing was on the wall, for it could only have made a profit with an audience of 7000 or more. And so we had to say off all the Company after *Musical* closed, leaving only me and my secretary.

None of the former employees decided to stay in Newcastle, and present theatre audiences they had to go on the date for four weeks while returning, and it is good to report that the season of these performances was virtually booked out before opening. Their action came from their considerable faith in both the idea of regional theatre and the region itself, and has gone some way to confirming a widespread feeling that NHTC has been imposed on the region by a Sydney entrepreneur (the Arts Council), which might well benefit some other area than Sydney — money, a Sydney artistic director, and Sydney actors — although we have provided twenty-four roles for local actors in less than eighteen months.

Our present crisis is the second at least this year. In the gloom that has shrouded the company recently there has been much talk of failure. But the attendance figures for our first production suggested success, if we compare our achievement with that of other companies. When the OH Tote opened in 1963 it was the first professional theatre company in NSW, presenting four plays to an average audience of just over 6000, the average audience for our six management productions last year was 2200 — more than half that of the Tote's in a city one tenth the size of Sydney. Their third production was *Musical*, which we have just presented; they played to about 8000, we to almost 8000. These figures do not allow us to disadvantage yet bear in mind that at that stage the Tote did not have its first writer or director, designer, stage manager, floor manager, set construction, administration, office overheads, or rent — all of which were provided by staff and students of NIDA or by the UWA. We have had to pay all of these and, by a determination of the board, at least award wages to full-time employees, that no overtime, independently hard-working employees will subsidise us. The comparison with *Musical's* first year is even more surprising. They played seven shows in a total of about 17,000 seats to over 10,000; ours, their average was about 2,000 to our 1,200. It is hard to see the world failing of

such ascendancy.

Of the ten management plays we have presented, we have been Australian, including the world premiere of *A Major and Minor* by local writer John O'Donoghue to be published in *Theatre Australia*. One of the joys of a regional company is to reflect the life of the region, and O'Donoghue's play did this superbly. It was our most successful straight play last year. We were to have presented in June the premiere of O'Donoghue's most recent play, *The Breakfast*, but our room has opened since. We hope to premiere it before too long.

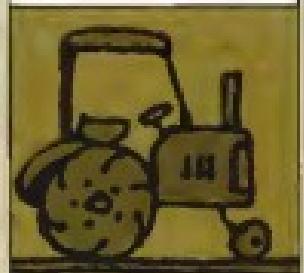
We do not only present management productions but have a community program which covers, amateur theatre, schools and workshops for local groups, for prison, for the university, for the College of Advanced Education, and for young people. We are a regional drama resource centre, acting classes, professional assistance to local groups, an efficient playwriting service, and so on. I have no doubt that this less polished work is just as important administration and liaison as the Community Director Michael Caulfield devised, directed, composed music for, and performed in *Pantoland* and *Accidental Angels*, two anthologies of poetry and music which played in more than 6,000 pupils and were enthusiastically well received wherever they went.

It is not easy to find actors who are prepared to go out of circulation for one or two months, and perform scenes by just producers, directors, and casting agents. We have been lucky indeed to have people of the calibre of Robert Alexander, Tony Sheldon and Kenny Walker (who all spent 1870 in Newcastle) and, this year, Alan Baddeley and Pat Bishop. Pat came to us as guest artist for one show, has stayed on, and will have been with us for over six months by the time she leaves. There will abroad in Newcastle something of the cultural精英 that marked all districts in country towns years ago — "if you were any good you wouldn't be here", the presence of such an acclaimed and well-known actor as Pat, and her commitment to the company (both Pat and Alan have played on for the theatre assessment show) have helped to reflect that feeling.

As I write I do not know when we shall resume, or indeed if we shall. It has been suggested that we have grown too quickly, we had sixteen employees for most of this year, and with the double load of management and community work, never let like too many — on the contrary, the very long hours most have had to work is very worrying. It seems likely that an unpermitted minimum wage will pass as shortly as should have had one from the outset, but administrators do not lie thick on the ground. Without a healthy injection of money, both to clear out debts (about \$16,000, plus more to get our books caught up in time) and to enable us to get another production underway, our future is uncertain. *Musical's* benefit of March 20 on 24 July, Newcastle Repertory's of

The Local Doctor on 26 July, and others planned but not yet defined, are exceedingly precarious. The financial support and loans to flagging groups are most warmly appreciated, coming as they do from groups who could well use the money themselves. Without more money, without a big brother or friend or a family that we can stagger these costs in time without permission it is doubtful we can do anything. The City Council has approved our use of a few rooms of part of the old city hall, but free enterprises very often think, "Somebody there must be a rough space for rough dealers, a warehouse or factory near the center of town somewhere awaiting conversion" — a playing site for about 200 people. Although NHTC is not yet Newcastle sufficient Newcastrians want us to stay to justify our existence. There has been almost daily our responsibility at the available *Newcastle Morning Herald* the results generally are an echo with particular concern from the local ABC and local Chamber of Trade, members of councils are working hard on fund-raising, promises, memberships, and articles. Members have been delivering our mail to our cases and helping out at the office, there is a resolution to let the switch go or to set up the I think we will just continue that until we find a way.

The Riverina Trucking Company



Terry O'Connell,
Artistic Director

The Riverina Trucking Company opened in August 1976 with Ron Blair and Michael Boddy's *Musical* on fire. The production was staged with a budget of \$200 raised from within the company.

Owing to the success of the production it was decided to stage a season of Robin Parry's *Artemis* & *Children*. Despite dire predictions patrons were turned away from full houses at each performance.

Immediately following *Artemis*'s Children the company presented *Snowie* an outdoor entertainment for children which was presented free of charge throughout the summer. This production,

devised by the company and directed by Gordon Boston was presented in Wagga's parks and gardens and also toured south coast beach resorts.

Early in 1977 it was decided a permanent home was needed for the Tramping Company. Riverside College of Advanced Education kindly leased to the company a former rental car abandoned arts studio workshop on their south campus. This area was, in the early months of 1977, converted into the intimate theatre where the company now presents its shows. The \$1000 needed for the conversion was raised by public appeal.

The theatre opened with the American premieres of Jim West and Brad Simpson's musical *Discreet Assets*. The production played to 100% capacity concluding with an 11.30 pm Sunday performance at which 120 patrons attended. (The theatre seats 108.)

Discreet Assets was followed by a season of David Williamson's *The Rosicrucians* and late night performances of the company-devised *For People Shows*.

For the remainder of 1977 the company will present seasons of Shakespeare's Much Ado About Nothing, company-devised local history musical *Riverside in the Rockies* and, by arrangement with Signature Ventures Ltd., London's Andrew Lloyd Webber and Tim Rice's *Jesus Christ Superstar*. The company will also present group-devised late night entertainment and special events. The company's artistic director is Terry O'Connell (Country Arts Council Council) and the company's manager is Fred Lynn (formerly NSW Division Cultural Activities).



Festivities are now being made to turn the company into a small professional regional theatre company operating at such intensity 1978. The company's policy will be to bring the theatre experience to the widest number of Riversiders possible. It will continue to present seasons in its own theatre as well as touring the Riversides regularly and presenting special community activities. The company will concentrate on presenting original group devised work, coloured interpretations of classical plays and contemporary Australian work. It is envisaged that again from the professional artists employed the company will also emphasise the involvement and participation of local artists.

This will enable larger cast plays to be performed and keep the community spirit and image of the Tramping Company alive. Solid financial support is now being sought for the project and it is hoped that government funding bodies will contribute to the relevantly small amount needed to substantiate this existing project.

The company already possesses its own theatre, a growing following, a firm policy and its own artistic director and designer. We believe that our place will work because of the solid base they now possess, to make the Riverside Tramping Company a unique and exciting professional regional company.



Mobilising Wagga Marguerite Wells

Having established Wagga, the Riverside Tramping Company proceed to enhance it. With a production every six weeks, they truck their audience rents from the local private theatre, and then truck them back again. On the last night of their much heralded *Discreet Assets* they turned away 120 people from their one hundred seat theatre and they have undertaken just for this new production, Much Ado About Nothing. "Country towns will stay away from Shakespeare in direct" they are being told, but then they were told this about *Artemis*, *Chichester*, *Murder on Ice* and the *Rosicrucians* too. Instead of collapsing in a heap, as they might have been expected to do, the Riverside Tramping Company struggle勉強ly on, trucking their lights from the school hall to the theatre and back again for each production, and filling their hired seats with eager takes bays.

Much Ado is going on with a budget of \$1,000; the profits from *The Rosicrucians* and *The People Also Stand Up*. After Much Ado comes *Rachmaninov* the Russian悲劇悲劇, which they are devising themselves, and *Maria*. Then they will move from their off-the-beaten-track space in the Riverside C.A.B. to a renovation in the central city to round off the year with a money-making, (and, I have no doubt theatrically successful), extravaganza *Jesus Christ Superstar*. Their director, Terry O'Connell, expects that by the end of the year, these profits will have

paid for lights and other essential equipment that they have improvised till now.

A company which expects to make a profit at the box office is unusual enough. That one, with two professional staff — Terry O'Connell, the director, and the designer, Fred Lynn — comes up with the same unvarying demands for resources as has the one performance of its *Macbeth*. Shakespearian productions brought out six weeks in advance by an association of cultural clubs. It has been used to do this around in League Clubs with the same guaranteed by the club management. They are planning a free theatre for the Wagga Agricultural Show. This is a very popular show, and one with amateur entry. It has seen no amateur self-indulgence in any Tramping Company production. *Discreet Assets* was a small and workmanlike production, and in May 1977 Riversides did delightful evenings at the theatre, *Discreet Assets*租用 above. *Artemis* at the Nutred, with *The People Also Stand Up* following for first place with the *Married's Much Ado*.

By the end of this year, the Company will have done eleven productions in eighteen months. Seven of these will be Australian plays, four devised by the company themselves. They estimate on only plays that they really want to do, and that means a policy of writing one out of three programmes. While there may be many things that they decide not to try at Wagga yet, or they don't intend to run after cheap success, Terry O'Connell says hopefully that if they staged Dickensian-style English farces, they could fill the central city auditorium all year round. (If that is true, why didn't JCW come to Wagga?) He returns to allow himself to believe that being based in a country town need limit their repertoire. Those wicked words in *Claude Landauville's Sage*: No might have meant that some Wagga-ites will never see a Tramping Company production, but then, as he points out, look at the Wagga-ites who turn up to every movie production, sometimes two nights running.

Plans for the future could bring great a Federal/State grant, which at the moment is under consideration, though the central public service seems A staff of eight — director, designer, administrator and producer, all on the minimum of salary, of course, would make touring possible, and give scope for the forecast of 1978 plans to explode — *The Club*, *On Our Television*, *Rock and Roll*, *Bomber*, *Two Bob a Ticket* and *Australian Stories* — gold rush to consider. *Rise For Your Lives* (photomontage on Australian athletes, and why people push themselves to their physical limits), and *The Great Australian Radio Serial Show*, with a family who develop with the development of the radio and the roads they follow.

The Tramping Company tries to make each of its productions a little bit adventurous for Wagga. Each has been a new adventure for me, and, come to think of it, not such a small adventure either when a round a three hundred mile drive weekly.

**By no means
the best atmosphere
in which
to appreciate
the Troupe**

**STAMPEDE
FALL-OUT AND FOLLOW ME**

INDY BACHELORE

Stampede and Fall-out and Follow Me (Popular Theatre Troupe at La Boite Theatre, Brisbane Qld)

With: Robyn Atkinson, Jo Cason, Richard Butterworth, Jim Hinde, Greg King, John Lloyd O'Neil, Nuala Scott

La Boite Theatre has now established a very successful practice of play performances at 5.30 pm on a Sunday followed by a standing ovation of some kind. This fine weekend, unfortunately in most respects, and that fine period after 5.30 o'clock can be pleasantly while away with a play followed by a gentle chat over some cheap nachos before dropping into bed with a book around 10.30.

The Popular Theatre Troupe recently opened a brief three-night season at La Boite with such a Sunday performance, taking on the optional extra of recording afterwards to some vintage jazz at Captain Street. This may be the task of the audience, but over the past week indicated that both the performances and the others were well-received.

The occasion was something of a hybrid, however, and by no means the best atmosphere in which to go to a real appreciation of the work of the company. In part it became a sort of PR event — an opportunity for interested special groups to see the Troupe in display, and as there were liberal sprinklings of audience from various institutions and both clusters of people from other theatre groups. That meant that the show took place in a strange climate of professional detachment mixed with self-conscious compunction. Small wonder that there was evident confusion of intention in the performances. Especially when the rest of the available audience were GOF who had paid their \$3.50 for a night of theatre. (The price, by the way, seemed to me a bit excessive for a little over one hour's total playing time. This added element of the benefit performance to the evening.)



The first of the two shows on the programme was *Stampede* which uses the producer metaphor of a B-grade western movie to look at the struggle between the miners and the establishment. The under-sieve, like gomers, champions all the under-dog, take on the corrupt but amazingly respectable sheriff (big business) and his willing deputies (Maf). And the miners, the deputies are performed by one actor, so that Maf and the media are delightfully presented as two aspects of the same character. For a time the mining rats from the rock in favour of the down-trodden, all out to sweet-talked into going legit, and co-operating with the law-in-order system in return for a share of the profits. They learn the error in the end of the play riding furiously off into the sunset to carry on the good fight alone.

Seen, as it were, under glass, in the hot-house setting I have described, such an unglamorous mesh of the potency of careers in the quadrangle of a C46 or a miners' tent, or in trust of executives from a big multinational, where it tops cheerily with group prejudices. So we missed the wonderful visceral response that shows get in the context for which they were designed. By way of compensation we were able to cast a cooler critical eye on the style, and see how it reduces the swaggering world of politics to the level of cardboard characters and comic book illustrations, revealing the laughable within the pomposity.

In this regard, Fremantle folk are probably depicted as a patient, resourceful, quick-witted people in famous "Cave All Britain" containing the wonder ingredient State of Emergency. Attaching to this simple picture are all the reverberations of the mineral operator covering the pickable masses with his presence about their satellite, while simultaneously serving his own interests.

Allusive qualities of this type are one of the better features of the style. They are an extension of the atmospheric fables which is the matrix of the approach. Like all metaphors their power and value lie in

imagination, not in logic.

The over-all image of *Stampede*, which presents relatively serious or heroic losses, is not altogether pleasant in the end. It is this which causes so many people to say that plays of this kind are merely preaching to the converted. While this is no doubt true to a degree, it does not allow that there are any other aspects to any dramatic picture apart from the story or talk — aspects of character and relationships. For example. There is much truth in the idea that business leaders, governments and the media cast themselves as eternally vigilante defenders of the law, and certain sections see their role as fighting outside the law for the rights of the poor and the oppressed. Once such self-stylers are accepted into the legitimate status of the B-grade movie begin to live their school in real life. In recognising this we have a touchstone for much of the absurd behaviour which characterises public life, and a means of distancing ourselves from it. This is much more valuable than any superficial message the "play" may contain.

This is even the case in *Fall-out* and *Follow Me*, the second of the shows we saw, where the anti-nuclear banner is much easier for me to support. Just as I am less likely to be converted by the first "play", pro-warrior people are unlikely to change their minds if they see the second. This is a spite of the fact that *Fall-out* contains one of the most brilliant pieces of irony I have seen in the Popular Theatre Troupe's work.

This is the sequence where Nuala Scott, in a kickingly surprising portrayal of a home-grown gardening expert, takes us through a few little do's and don'ts in cultivating the charming urban garden. ("Not to be confused with the common stone bimb wood"). Discussing matters of safety mostly in the broad terms of a domestic gardening problem, coupled with the antithesis between growing things and the destructive potential of uranium, makes this sketch a horrifying piece of sick humour.

While the content of the programme was thrown into interesting form by the situation, the performances, general for non-theatre buildings, were not. There was a disconnection at the basis of a theatre which detracted from those special skills the company has developed, and called for areas of technique which they normally do not require and could not supply.

The effect was something like a good League Club performer trying to give a character recital. Popular theatre is most vital when it is with the people.



An innovation by Mr George that is certainly worth repeating

FOUR PLAY READINGS

EDWYN BAKER

Four play readings by the South Australian Theatre Company at Theatre 62, Adelaide last Friday April 10. Mr George Soulemanoff's *Any Four Can Play*, Mr Fred Cott's *The Last Stand* and Mr Roger Shan's *Ram Ram*. July 20-21, 1977.

Cole George's arrival as its new artistic director seems to have begun a period of considerable resonance for the South Australian Theatre Company, new faces, new approaches and, most recently, a new format.

Between the end of last year of his first season and the launching with *Any Four Can Play* of the second, he has caused three brief series of Australian play readings.

Mr George was quoted in the local press as saying the season was an attempt to foster a constructive relationship between the company and Australian writers — particularly those living in South Australia. Given the much ballyhoo that surrounds politics that is a laudable and interesting aim to itself.

It also provided the small audiences gathered up — paying only \$1 each — with stimulating entertainment and, hopefully, encouraged Mr George to repeat the experiment. He added to both the circumstances and the experimental nature of the occasions by having the author present and, with him and the readers, concluding a discussion period with the audience afterwards.

Now a critic's confession: personal circumstances meant I was able to attend only two of the four evenings, co-incidentally the two produced by Mr George himself. Brian Debono directed *Any Four Can Play* and David Young, *Any Fool Can Stavely*. Speaking those remarks are then confined to my thoughts.

First the blurb: In addition to the discussion of an Adelaide winter's night (it actually occurred in the hills) on one of them in a dilapidated theatre not only designed for warmer times but also under the high peak of the main脊, the cast had apparently had only a brief opportunity to go through the songs before the

readings. This made for a number of faults, particularly in *The Right Man*, detracting from the general high level of professionalism and见识ing the mood.

More seriously, the format of a reading with limited movement (for me anyway, to highlight emotional conflicts or basic implications in the plays), and another was free of doubt that that situation should be kept in the context of general success. The presentation, with the director sitting in one side providing the audience with brief stage settings and directions, was good, the readings able and the plays worthwhile. Mr Cott's *I Found the River interesting* A people play in the sense that it is incapable of various interpretations, as the subsequent discussion established, it centres on a young man, Duncan Anderson, and the reader and several visitors of a boarding schoolboy several years before Release from a period in a mental hospital. In contacts an old friend now apparently mixed up with a neo-Nazi movement. Is it all a fantasy or Duncan's mind? Are the friend and a former classmate, and, now apparently landlord of the flat where most of the action takes place, really fascists, Nazis? Are they partly of the original master? Such territory has been explored before but, especially with a knowledgeable guide, it repay a reread.

Mr Cott's play is more conversationally accessible. It is about the open primaries and was for a vital by-election of a political candidate who personifies party and idealism. Eventually, as the campaign progresses he is caressed or stampeded, according to view, into compromise and into an act of betrayal. Familiar country again but it can be effective theatre. My initial, however, have some trouble with his characters in accepting not being quite sure whether to develop them fully or whether to portray them as types. For instance the candidate is named Hope and other characters include Crowley and Wheeler. Another problem for anybody acquainted with politics as life is played in that area the outcome remains a couple of fundamental probabilities. Content again, though. We hear Mr George's word for it that these readings were arranged to generate such responses. Certainly the authors much to my taste have been helping for full productions. How reason to be grateful to him. And so back the audience.

Next year, and there should be a next year, one hopes for a little more preparation and for the company to find more comfortable surroundings, perhaps the new permanent Space at the Festival Centre.

It is a score full of delights, unexpected turns and fluidity

THE CORONATION OF POPPY

MICHAEL MORLEY

The Coronation of Poppy by Montserrat Llorente & F. Bazzocca, Rehearsed by Raymond Leigh, State Opera of South Australia, The Playhouse, Adelaide, Opened 18 July 1977. Director: Adrián Stück, Designer: John Corcoran, conductor: Myri Friedman. Porters: Peter Thompson, Peter, Angelo DiCarlo, Anna, Barbara Phillips, Dolorès, John Moore, Fred, Soldier, Valence, Ruth Miller, Renzo, Captain, Lorraine, Thomas Edwards. Poppies: Barbara Hansen, Nelly, Gregory Drury, Andrea, Norma, Knight, Odile, Dagmar, Harris, Dorothy, Peter, Waymire, Sianca, Ruth Thompson, Priscilla, Barbara, Angela, Dorothy, Lorraine, David Beaman.

On the face of it, the choice of Montserrat Llorente's *The Coronation of Poppy* would not have seemed to hold much box-office appeal for Adelaide audiences. They are hardly the most reliable public for new or adventurous works, and pessimism — or even pragmatism — might well have contemplated a take-away response to musical and dramatic action which could seem spare and restricted to the devotion of Purists and Purists, but the production has triumphantly vindicated the choice of the work and it is to be hoped that contrast other than Adelaide will give the opportunity to appreciate the extraordinary musical richness and superb characterization of a work which, as conductor Myri Friedman points out, is far from being a "Mozartean fable". To my (subjectively) prejudiced eye and ear, there is more invention and musical truth in the characterisation and voice of Poppy than in all the wistfully brittle and monotonously displayed emotional outpouring of Frost and Austin.

Poppy, more so than more familiar works, may well seem to fit Bharat's view of opera as "a play representing life from another world, whose inhabitants have no speech but song, no motions but gestures and no passions but statuary". But when song is as expressive, the attitudes as eye-moving and the gestures as eloquent as here, one can be grateful to State Opera for realising, as of the introductory of a work that it can indeed play home done nothing in spite of its appeal and power.



There were laughs,
but this
time the oohs and
ahs were not there

MARCEL MARCEAU

MARCEL BRITTE WEILS

Marcel Marceau presented by Michael Kirby International and Dame Glynn Cadogan Theatre, Canberra ACT. Opened 19 July 1977.

*Marcel Marceau, presenter of *comédie humaine*, manager: Jacques Chauvin.*

True humility is the red rose in the black top hat of showmanship, and there is something rather sad about an artist who takes three curtain calls, (plus three in interval), while his audience is only prepared to give two. The sight of the great performer bowing and making obeisance to a theater of adulation which was really only appreciative applause, was a scene which plagued the heartstrings as much as any other in the programme. It happened for two reasons, because he anticipated too much and because he anticipated too little.

In addressing the 'young audience', his walking against the wind and the shaking cage, which are a beginning student's introduction to the art, and in advancing an 'all new programme', the Compagnie de Mime Marcel Marceau seemed to be acknowledging that it is quite easy to become blind about music. Those who were truly moved, their spirits purged, at their first revelation of such a hardly seen game, had now recovered from the shock, and were back, raising more sophistication. The programme itself acknowledged it in presenting just a little too much the inexperience of youth and the immaturity of Marceau. But the frames were still full of little displays of virtuously meant to amuse the uninitiated, the sculptor, struggling under the weight of a statue, in a sprawling thigh-split, the weight-lifter, swooning to the floor in the splits, the mask maker who changes his countenance with lightning speed, yet ends ended up with the wrong expression on his face. There were laughs — plenty of laughs, but the oohs and ahhs were not there.



Marceau is no longer quite the revolution his programme was meant to be, and in a large theatre it is hard to see how he could be. The physical subtleties of the most subtle art are lost; if you know the thought of an eagle, and if you really should have seen your epiphany a couple of months ago, then all that remains for you are the thigh-pulls and the splits and the lightning changes. The shadows on the muscles of the hand that make a close-up of Youth, Maturity, Old Age and Death so heart-stopping are gone. If you are there to be amazed by subtlety of technique you will not see it in a five hundred seat theatre, and if you are there for grand con ceptual theory, deep insights into the human condition, you will not see that either.

In the final scene, "Bip in the Modern and Future Life" it became only too obvious that Marceau's strength is in elegance and subtlety of expression, not in the conceptual design of his work. It bears his own note that "A mime, in order to be understood by all, must be simple and clear, without ambiguity". Bip's progress from a banished struggle with modern mechanised marvels, through the glorious freedom of the future, only to return again to the age, would have made three scenes, but it did not make one. Bip was a most beautiful ape, who carried the torch of our civilization. Half a million dollars worth of King Kong was a mere top ministry on a string besides Marceau, but the audience ended up as bemused as Big Red bear, convinced that there was a lot on, that it was meant to be a profound statement about the future of man, and that it hadn't worked.

Marceau's signature, "presenter of comedy", Pierre Véry, brash and boisterous and bophemous like a wounded Blue Boy, sums the whole thing up. His dress and his manner waver between the stammer and the mumble-mouthed. No-one could wish them to do otherwise. But one could wish that Marceau had been content to do the same. His pug-pledged innocent Bip, singing after corruption, and his old lady gallivanting in the park make him an elegant creature indeed, but "Bip in the Modern and Future Life" had the measured pedagogical subtlety of third rate modern class.

Marceau's art is an art of little things and great conceptual theory is just beyond its reach, which is why the theater of adulation was really only appreciative applause. I left with the feeling that Marceau is a marvellous piece and should have thematic grandeur to others.



The deft hand of director, Jon Finlayson is seen everywhere as the pace never slackens

THE GLITTER SPOTTER

SARAH EATON

The Glitter Sisters: Silver & Hollywood Palace,
Stony Unidos 11 July 1977 Director Jon
Finlayson musical director James Campbell
With Karen Colosimo, Maggie Street, Geraldine
Mervin, Jay Miller, Lynn Lovett

If you like your entertainment with the music of the Korean dance in a high camp style by free-living and talented ladies then don't miss the Glitter Sisters.

Following a highly successful run in Melbourne the act has now hit Sydney. No cast here it now stars some well known local ladies.

The show opens with a medley of old songs just as at the stage. Then we take off with a real mixture of beauty pageants, free ranged numbers, drama, cocktail scenes and clever impersonations. I loved the show-to-imagine with appearances by Dorothy Lamour, Ethel Merman, Duncan Dunes and a very funny off key Marlene Dietrich about the stage. Great — but true.

The inevitable appearance of Shirley Temple with (was it a guinea pig?) 'The Good Ship Lollipop' nearly brought the house down. The show is a very clever blending of imitation and individual talent. The deft hand of director, Jon Finlayson is seen everywhere as the pace never slackens.

With the girls first come on stage in their gaudy costumes and lively Andrew Brown says, I was convinced that they were skins so much did they look alike. As the evening drew by each sister individually delighted the audience at some stage with her personality and talents.

Most of the entertainment is musical and the show can't be faulted here. Unfortunately a couple of the comedy sketches are much too long and not very funny. Particularly the Roy Rogers stand-up which seemed to go on forever.

I almost had to be carried out in the cocktail room demonstration. A very lady-like Karen Colosimo (becoming more and more attracted with each new outfit)

and the result is hilarious. The memorable follow-on sketch was Spike Jones' 'Cocktails for Two' — very well done.

Being a child of the 40s perhaps I am most influenced by the material songs like "Hava Nagila", "Chicago", "You got a guy in Kalamazoo", "Sentimental Journey", "Lili Marlene", "Ain't Seen My". I could keep on going! A version of "Booger Wooger Boogie Boy" that our Andrews the sisters themselves, plus a lovely laconic version of the famous "Hava and Coca Cola". These are just some of the delights that the Glitter Sisters deliver, all done in such a high camp style I assure the ladies all have permanent tongue indentations at their checks.

Long may the Glitter Sisters go!

Jane Street back in the big time with two undeniable successes

**THE RIPPER SHOW:
DON'T PIDDLE AGAINST THE
WIND, MATE**

FRANK HARRIS

The Ripper Show and how they went at it
By Frank Harris — NIDA production of Jane
Street's play, 1 & 2 July, Theatre 13 June 1977
Director: Stephen Webber, Designer: Bill
Pritchard, Musical Director: Bruce Clegg
Choreographer: Barbara Baur
Cast: Karen, Rose Graham, Fletcher Shipton,
Maggie Fitzgerald, Jane Sharpe, Karen
MacDonald, Linda Sharp, John Parsons, Mr
Barney Hartnett

*A Public Against the Wind, Show by
Karen, Rose, NIDA production of Jane
Street, Sydney, 1 & 2 July, Theatre 13 June 1977
Director: John Taylor, Designer: Bill Pritchard
From: Paula, John Cleman, Ben O'Brien, Ben
O'Driscoll, Norma Davis, Vicki Macpherson,
Philip Nutter, John Parsons, Thomas Davies,
Maggie Fitzgerald, Karen, Fletcher, Barbara
Fitzgerald*

Sydney's Jane Street Theatre, offspring of NIDA, is an animal rocky dog in new, experimental plays.

Sometimes good, often brilliant, sometimes just scrapping by and on a few occasions occasions failing enough to go no longer direction.

The 1977 season paid it back in the big time again with two undeniable successes — Frank Hartnett's musical, *The Ripper*

show (and how they went at it) and Karen, Rose's revision, and up-to-the-minute sociological thriller, *Don't Piddle Against the Wind, Mate*.

But let's return for the moment to the Jane Street story.

For its first season in 1976 the theatre presented six new plays — with Terry Morphett, Rod Milgate, James Scatena and Thomas Kennedy among the authors of those passing off.

Jane Street entered the lists two years later with his *Terrier Attraction* which broke a few barriers but earned only temporary success.

Alexander Bain's *Assisted* was the 1980 winner. It is now in Currency Press publications and still goes strong.

John Street really took off in 1979 with Michael Boddy and Rob 'Em' King's *O'Malley* a mighty success which rambled like an out-of-control under the null understate ground.

In 1982 came David Williamson's *Don't Piddle*, an immediate smash which went on to be a stage and film success supreme.

After that, the doldrums for a few years, the only lasting stand-out being Dorothy Hewitt's *Porpoise and Roast for Dolly* which is still being played around the country.

There are highlights enough to make them justify the theatre's 11 years of life. Now the Hartnett and Rose plays put a bright light on Jane Street as one of the most adventurous new-wave theatres in Australia.

Hartnett's *The Ripper Show, Part of* the season, already has American interests regarding after it.

Now a play, short, about a union confrontation with a relentless manager, is the more powerful — both jarringly, and truly. Think of the Broken Hill miners war in the last half century.

It is a play with grit and reality enough to give it a high survival rate in its portrayal of a man who backs union rules — and invokes the better parts of his former mates — to defend his individual right of resistance.

John Taylor's direction, with a very strong cast, had a tremendous impact on opening night.

Bob and Frank are warden baddies and what about rest. In the opening scene they stand on about war planes but are discussing outback tensions.

A weakness still is that the initial passage is over extended before the real point of action is revealed.

Bob, ordered to pay a social levy (a 'bush levy' as he calls it) demands a

voluntary vote rather than a compulsory order. He is defiant but, reluctantly, goes along.

After that comes the murderous 'test' in Coventry, action against the rabid. No man can obey such a union order and get away with it.

"Don't piss against the wind, man," Frank warns (Poldie) as he is supposed to be more acceptable in the role) and groans: "Why do I have to pain you as a mate when everybody else is normal?"

Murphy goes down the drain. Frank deserts his friend and stands by the union.

Bob's wife Thelma, a seemingly quiescent and loving wife, breaks under the strain of death threats and tidy phone calls and leaves him.

The adored daughter stands up for Dad at last but is pulled away by her fiance, whose business interests are threatened by the cancer-like spread of the union's influence.

Bob is left alone, trying with faltering courage to stick to that principle of individual salvation against the tyranny of 'the raw luxury of anonymous power', as Ross puts it.

Ron Graham (Bob) and Maggie Paterson (Thelma) worked superbly as they moved from the quiet opening scenes to a shattering climax in which Bob threatens to kill them both with a grenade. The emotional power of that scene was overwhelming.

John Clayton was excellent as Shelly Fagan and Sam MacLennan had endearing yet touching as the bewilarded daughter.

Watch out for Norm Hinchliffe. She's an outstanding young actress with assured potential.

This was a top-notch too in Maternity v. *The Biggest Show*, which opened the season — not only a clever satire but a lightning-quick winner with instant appeal.

The Biggest Show is a musical rather a play — still a bit lagged-in in balance at opening night but with enough sparkle and invention to make it memorable. A repeat show added.

Shakespeare's Shrewish Shakespearian plays are a rarity, run down through all of love with the public in presenting paired versions of the Bard despite the Johnson Richard III, which opens the show.

To liven up the box office returns they turn to "sex and violence" and build a hit with a musical based on the then current news headlines horror — Jack the Ripper and his sex murders.

It's crazy, and sometimes macabre, but a very funny musical, with catchy music by Jeremy Borow and, under Shirley Whitham's expert direction, engaging work from the merry border players and dancers — Ron Graham, Maggie Patterson, John Patterson, Don Reid (guitarist) as the man who falls under the Ripper's spell, and of course Nevaughn. Her comic song, "I Married a Monster", will a show stopper.

When I saw Ripper the show still needed tightening but its potential is obvious. No wonder the Americans are interested.

Frank Hunt is there and more critic for the Daily Mirror.



A virtuoso performance by both writer and actor

STRENGTH OF THE IMAGINATION

RON CHAMPION

A Review of *The Assignment* by Jack Hibberd Australian Performing Group at the National Theatre, Sydney, NSW, Opened 2 July 1977 Director, Paul Hampton set designer, John Lomax lighting designer, David Franklin Music director, Mark O'Neill Music O'Neill

That is the boldest kind of review to make the evening was perfectly acceptable. The play, production and performance were all equally accomplished and, to make it harder, firmly entrenched in one actor, making analysis difficult. And finally, I'm not even able to compare Mark O'Neill to Mark O'Neill with any of the other Mark O'Neills, since this is the first time I've seen the play performed.

I've always had the feeling that a one-man play is something of a contradiction in terms — as if drama can only happen between two or more persons. I don't think the *Beckett* could be logically extended, but the notion of spending the evening with only one actor always gives me a slightly sinking sensation. Jack Hibberd's character has amazingly violent, from time to time, he sets off all sorts of ripples and is about as irrational and erratic as language as anyone could ever want him to be. But I still feel the lack of another voice, another face — not because Mark O'Neill (as played by Mark O'Neill) was in any way callous, by himself, but for purposes of our personal evaluation, for example.

Again, than I now set the *Beckett* that the National Downtime space has never been used to better advantage, the scale of the performance, the size of the set in relation to the number of the audience and the placing of the audience in the space seemed just right. (Contrast it, for example, with Gordon Chater's dengue *Franklin* in the same space where one tended to get a bit more perspective, and in a larger context.)

I watched the play then, for the first time, without having read it, and I would like to record the fact that I was continuously reminded of the play of Samuel Beckett. I found myself comparing the play, in particular, with Beckett's *Erl King* — the old man with his memories, his dreams, his drinking, his recollections of sexual/sexual experience, his confused time-obsessed state of being. It began to look Mark O'Neill as an Australian version of a Beckett character and, somehow, by extension, as a symbol of Australian literary identity — Mark O'Neill, the ferment in the bush, playing with the names of Frost and Flane (or Beckett), fragments from the distant cultural tradition. And then at the wonderful comparative differences, the particular, topical, myth-making, Harry-Hampstead-like, generalised-localised emergence of the Australian dialogue as opposed to the universal, tradition-assuming, iconic reduction of Beckett's?

I received these somewhat sweeping generalisations as an indication of the way my mind was running in relation to Beckett during and immediately after the performance. The next day I bought a copy of the play and found to my surprise, that both the author, in his introduction, and Margaret Williams, in her preface, were in some pain to reject any linkage. Jack Hibberd, addressing himself to potential directors, says: "... it is an incentive to exercise from thought and scruples the final figure of Samuel Beckett!

Indeed, *A Streetcar of the Amazons* can plausibly be viewed as an indirect report to that increasingly banal and expected game. For Max O'Neill though a self-willed will and pure-time maniacalism wringing obsessively with his own mate-mate death is ultimately on the side of growth and human propensity". And a paperwriter Margaret Walraven is strong:

"Streetcar is as far removed as possible from the Beckett-Briton world. It is an affirmation, even celebration, of life in the face of inevitable death." Paul Hamburger's production was evidently sufficient in "increasing" Beckett for me. But that I don't really see the need for those disclaimers — would the play have to be disqualified from its title as "the first irreducible Australian theatrical classic" because of the aforementioned professed if not admitted use specifically to a European springboard? And anyway, I'm not convinced that a life-and-death affirming play is intrinsically better than one that bemoans and repeats the present, nor do I think in any more than a vague generalisation to associate the quality of Beckett's work with either alternative.

One of the things I wondered about was the degree of realism intended could this coupling of ideas, feelings, opinions add up to a real human being? (Not! That I necessarily think they should — I was only wondering the questions.) There are a few of Max's aphorisms which particularly caught my fancy to make his will, in favour of the Aboriginal peoples of Australia" and "the populous Central nations of the north, he regards his destruction of the tall trees in the area, daily watering with his own "irreverent wastes" a "pressing impulse" which will one day replace it. He is the only white class of classes at Kitee who was, nevertheless more physical than metaphysical. He is a constant classification by women, the florist who dressed the winning leather in the grand final of 1981, he mediates readings from Wrigginton with interpretations by Greg Salterio the small business owner down in the gutter — clutching Olyvier, and his own ever-supple disciple, evinced the range on many a Saturday night at the Falcon Burleigh Shambles.

Of course we see Max through his own eyes, just as we see the earlier day through which he is living, an over-the-century prediction for the morning and the possible necessity of "immersion of the reading parts" in Dead Dog Creek characterises the first half of the play, while the second takes place in what seems to be a mid-term nightmare, unmercifully followed by a sunset. The sunset signifies that a hot, earthy emanating is followed by a cold, oceanic effusion. Max's constant returning to the alarm clock in Muri's grave which begins the play and which stops at twelve, contributes to a feeling that the whole play is outside clock time in much the same way that Max is outside the society that he has rejected, but in which his thought-irregularity reigns. It is in this way that can only understand Max as a general equation of the anxiety we live in. And the malady of the

equation seems to rise to be Jack Hibberd's basic role: the extenuation of the will, the range of the words ("... two stations fasted on a field of afterbirth") can only be cultural and not intended or the neurotically observed ultimate of an aged regime.

On this note Jack Hibberd says that the actor's talents "should be employed to capture a complex character of constant change, to render coherent and dramatically organise a shattered day in a contracting life, to sustain and shape seriously all manner of personal and emotional episodes". Max Gelling seems to not to take the right approach when he makes Max's aged stiffness into a sort of acoustic display, when he acts out roles — like both water and deer at his various faltering moods — with vocal aplomb when he takes equal advantage of the colloquial ("... packed the Malvern Star up against a flying buttress and went for a swim up the Seine, introducing the Australian Cray to the Frog") and the literary ("Mark" Stibbe). Here the present seems part (*Pause?*) Not the task itself of readers and copy, but a catastrophic and ill-fated avowal — a when, as when, he sharpens up such moment into its own reality, playing off the various aspects of the character and the setting for all they are worth and implying coherence and the dramatic organisation look after themselves.

To close add up to a virtuous performance by both writer and actor. And there's surely nothing wrong with that.

Thankfully Act Four asserts its own shattering power over the production

THREE SISTERS

NORMAN WILKINSON

Three Sisters, by Anton Chekhov, translated by Ronald Shugert, Old Tote Theatre Company in The Open House Drama Studio, Sydney Opera House, 21 July 1981. Director William Redmond, designer James Ridewood, original music, Roger Butterley, lighting, Jerry Lake, Stage Manager, Michael Thompson, Men and Chekhov, Theatrical, costume, Marjorie Harry, Harry Solomons, John Krausse, Michael Murphy, Cleo, Arlene, Geraldine, Anton, Josephine, Sue, Ruth, Vicki, Bill Holden, Solon, Peter Whitchurch, Karen, The Doctor, Nicholas, Jackie, Valerie, Judith, Barbara, Marion, Ruth, Helen, Roslyn, Madeline, Patricia.

The more one reflects on the Old Tote Theatre Company's new production of Chekhov's *Three Sisters*, the more inferior it becomes to the version staged in 1980.

Reported to have used the same for a more realistic approach, director William Redmond's production is for the most part as superficial as designer James Ridewood's representation approach, each with

undeterministic geographical boundaries and openings across or through which characters move haphazardly. Even the bush trees are presented haphazardly with a confused foliage, slender, leaning poles.

Once again, as usual, a designer has been defeated by the unchangeable brashness of the Open House Drama Theatre's stage.

The living room of the Prozorov's country home, setting for Acts I and II, was apparently intended to permit the sort of on-going action John Clark used so effectively in his recent Old Tote production of *The Alchemist*.

Some characters enter through the dining room doors, apparently having come in via the front door, while others stand off from a dark road at the side, some more haphazardly than Natasha, who skips across, perhaps before an emergency toilet downstage, then turns and runs up into the back-stage, fully concealed, during night.

When Andrei brings her back downstage to propose, the audience has to imagine them out of sight of the rest of the family, usually talking and eating at the dining room table.

I found all this not only distressing, but a negation of Chekhov's carefully drawn portrait of three members of a tribe of Russian middle class as utterly well-adjusted and totally unaware and uncaring of anything outside their own pretty world. In the downstage living room where they cluster, squabble and philosophise, they are physically distanced by the width of the playing area, but there can obviously effort to treat them as a group.

Kenneth Tynan in his book, *Curtain*, quotes Peter Ustinov as contending that teamwork and Chekhov are in a strong sense incompatible. Ustinov describes the characters as actors who sometimes interrupt others as talking, but never listen to what anyone is saying, which is what makes them both tiresome and appalling. (One reviewer was truly about audience laughter, but surely Chekhov sought the stop?)

Tynan says this was far evident by Ustinov, adding that in *Three Sisters* it is a technique carried as far as can go without blighting the play dramatically apart.

Be that as it may, there is a distinctness about the first two acts of this production that begins to be disrupted at a verily bitter Act III when the characters are individualised and the essential softness of thoughts and acts emphasised. Here one feels at last some understanding of and sympathy for the sisters' longing for a fuller life in far-off Moscow — even though we know from experience it is a wish never to be fulfilled.

Thankfully, Act IV — one of the best ever written and well-rendered in this translation by Ronald Shugert from the definitive Moscow version — asserts its own shattering power over the production.

True, there here one day about details — the pedestrian parting between Irina and Tuzenbach as the latter goes off to fight the duel in which he will die at the

slow march around the stage by the hunched Andrew passing a grum — but as audience that had been showing no more than half-hearted approval was first exposed to genuine-containing enthusiasm.

Richardson's acting in general was sound, more so than in his share of *Amber Clare* as Maxie. This is a banefully controlled performance from start to finish, his growing love for Veronika suggested by look or smile, her grief at their parting utterly heart-rending.

Mervyn Mugambi as Olga and Elizabeth Albrecht as Iris are competent though inclined no be vainglorious, but they avoidly delightful across *Quinton Attak's Affair* remained a North Shore fixture wearing a headscarf.

A virtuoso performance saves one play, fine ensemble playing makes another

INDIEING INDIEING
THE IRISHMAN

LILY MCGOWAN

The Hostage by Sean O'Casey. Adapted by Michael Frayn and Doug Fifer. Presented by the National Theatre and Michael Lonsdale International Pty Ltd. Civic Theatre, Parramatta, NSW. Opened 20 July 1977. Director: Doug Fifer. Design: Bill Bass. Lighting: Doug Fifer. Sets: John Sibley. Costumes: Shirley Corcoran. Robert Bellfield. O'Sullivan. Jacqueline. Judith MacNaughton. Judith Potts. Reviewer: LILY MCGOWAN

The Hostage by Brendan Behan. NIDA Associate Drama Students' University Production, Newcastle NSW, Opened 27 July 1977. Director: George Whitley. Design: N.R. Clark. Major cast includes: Diane Cusack, Pauline Baynes, Meg Johnstone, Greg Smith, Michaela Nettleton, John French, Collette Dessaix, Roslyn Gitterman, Linda Mayes, Prue Macpherson, Trevor Gove, Michael Williams, M. Anthony, Robert Meagher, Michaela Nettleton, Linda Mayes, Linda Williams, Anthony Fotheringham, David Llewellyn, Joanne Suttor. Written January 1946. Director: Anne Bryson. NIDA Students, Met Gob-

The Whitley-Whitley production of *The Hostage*, which started its tour (Brisbane, Sydney and Melbourne) at Newcastle's Civic Theatre, is quite undoubtedly a vehicle on which to present impaired star (or more about the house) Richard O'Sullivan. As such it was perhaps a good choice, because only a strong actor of his ability could rescue this tired and rather stodgy little drama from being an evening of boredom, and he became very obviously the performance of the night.

The play centres around the once dashing idea of the man who dares to fight his

three air-hostess bosses and constantly keeps two of the lot and one of the head with the lots of an aeronautic instability. Unfortunately the weather and increasing speed of air travel cause his schedules to jostle, which is where Richard O'Sullivan, as the unscrupulous and crazed friend from Aus turns up to stay and join in the fun. The play fitted well with the aplomb that granted him success and from that on the laughs came fairly steadily, and almost entirely from O'Sullivan's remarkable ability to transform appalling bors into snatches of his own brand of burlesque comedy, and create easy business, for himself and others which took on the impossible logic of true farce.

This farcical and venomous performance, though it covered some of the play's flaws, also managed (through evident emotional upstaging) to unbalance the play somewhat so that all the other characters tended to pale helplessly into stereotypes. Doug Fifer (as the doctor), and second Mrs. Abbott (as Maxie's mom) was unable to save the worn-out wife from her role as most bumbling friend as the doors of illusion (between class with matching repartee), but really not strong enough in the straight man to O'Sullivan's full guy. At times O'Sullivan had to play his own straight man as well, to be able to get in the full guy element.

The three air hostesses were hard to discern, and they all deserved their own parts, that, they often had little to do but sit or stand around and look astong, but when involved in repartee none of them proved experienced enough daredevils to sustain the unperformed roles. Paula Brown as the faintly romantic German girl who eventually falls for Richard O'Sullivan made more of the part than the other two.

Professional taste is required to be strong and unpredictable but possibly it is tougher and more discriminating than that of those used to more and a greater variety of shows. In this lifeless play, of out-of-town try-out, playing Brighton to Sydney's London, it has not engaged well for the further run of *Boring Boeing*. The show does occasional audience and had to finish as soon as several days early, and this in spite of Richard O'Sullivan's great following. Although Richard O'Sullivan has been playing *Boring Boeing* — in Britain before Australia — for some time, the view had overall an under-rehearsed feel to it, which will perhaps have departed as the tour progresses. Though the stars in a virtuous performance, it would be preferable to see him in a better, perhaps more modest, comedy, that allows others a chance to shine too.

There were no women performances in *The Hostage*, the 1977 final year NIDA students' production, which made an equal try in Newcastle and Geelong, but the fifteen actors gave an excellent demonstration of ensemble playing that far much of the production worked very well. The situation holding *The Hostage* together is that of a young soldier taken as a hostage against the occupants the following morn-

ing of a Belfast youth for killing an Ulster policeman.

The IRA officers held the soldier as a hostage house/bond which houses a gallery of characters, or caricatures, ranging through gaudy prostitutes and homophiles to snakes from the Troubles. The soldier himself, played with some enduring youthful freshness by Anthony Price, makes his first appearance at the end of Act I, which should leave plenty of room for the visitors of the house to establish the various gags of themselves and their relationships before the catalyst is thrown in.

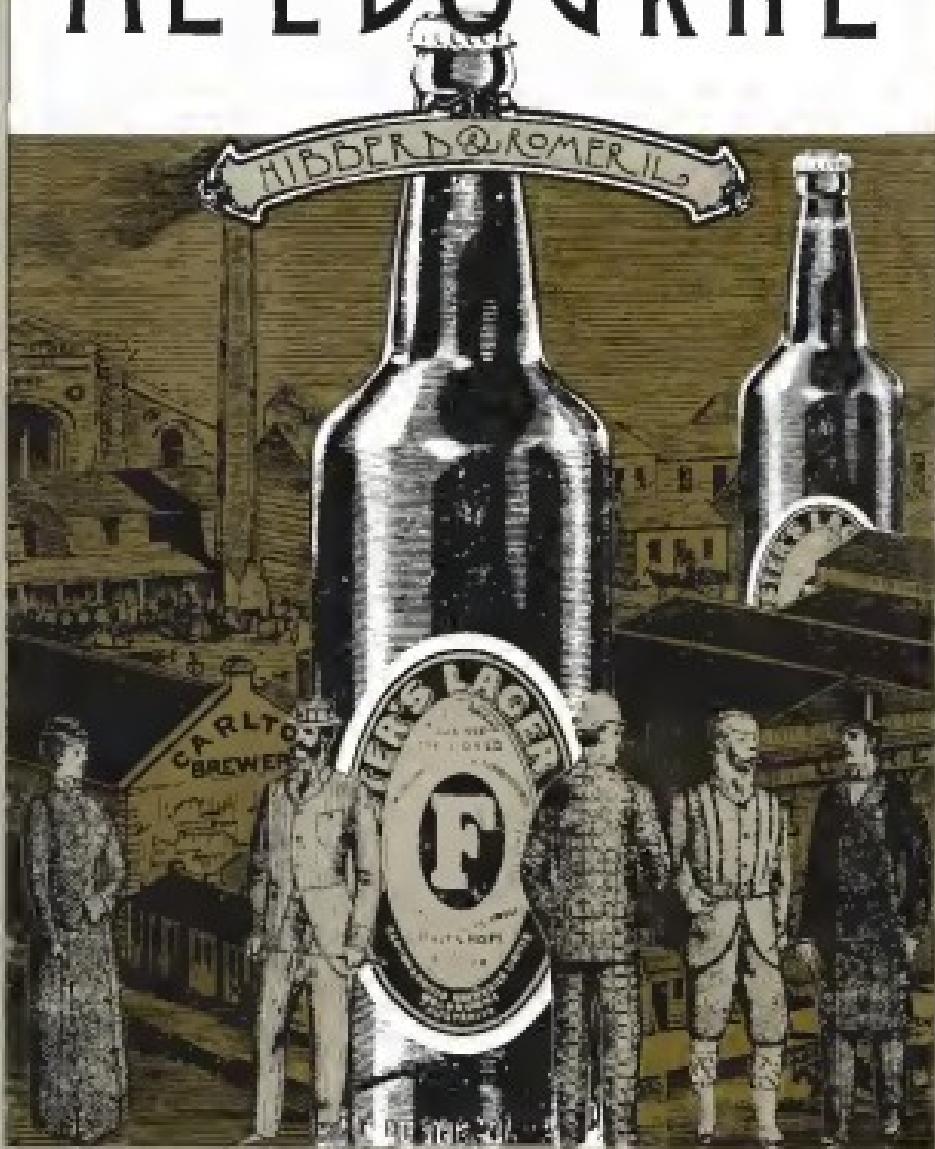
The two who stand out among the others are old Pat, owner of the house and veteran IRA man, and his long-standing terrorist, Meg. Their having fighting partnership, marred a little by time, is crucial to the establishment of the hostage house, other visitors may come and go, but these two will always be there. Similarly, though the great original power to the dual of each character, the impact of the play was blunted in George Whitley's production. Meg seemed to have no closer relationship with Pat than either of the other two old whores.

Sophie Harley as Pat was very competent and effectively aged, if at times a little too perceptive to extract the full humour from the part.

Virtually the production was a delight — with a terrific set designed by Mark Stage, that sensibly had two sets of three steps to a platform for leading, rather than the usual single high staircase, and providing interesting and full spaces which George Whitley used to their best, maintaining constant movement that was only occasionally distracting. The songs were well done, and revealed some beautiful singing voices, especially in Sarah McLean and Judy Davis. The adaptions and interpretations around the text remained in the programme notes are interesting, if not totally effective. The second act seemed to drag in some places, and the review in the *Guardian* of having the soldier shot in the cupboard was certainly, particularly as it was not clear from watching the whole that it was the sympathetic IRA man who shot him by mistake, and not, for instance, Meg. But *The Hostage* is a play that is never really effective in performance generally and always suffers from the very late introduction of the young soldier and the fact that the second act is a writing game — a long night that everyone wishes would end. The liaison between he and Terri, though nicely played in this production, and well contrasted with the affairs of the whores, particularly that of the belligerent Bea Kru and Princess Grace, is too brief and aptitude to warrant the emphasis then placed on it at the end. I wouldn't single out any one of the 1977 NIDA graduates as a potential star of the Australian stage, but their students in ensemble playing seem to show far greater promise for future careers, given that the importance of a star whose sparkling effort could only hold together a scrapping troupe.

Playscript

MARVELLOUS MELBOURNE



MARVELLOUS MELBOURNE PART 2

LADIES' SCENE

*Mrs. D. (singing) At church we're
singing at your place or our life where some-
thing's going on Mrs. D.*

Mrs. D. What's wrong with you?

Lily. Nagel has left me.

Mrs. D. That's a misery trait.

Lily. True it is.

Mrs. D. Hush!

*Lily. It was you who caused me to a pretty
and nervous failure.*

*Mrs. D. I treated you according to the best
traditions.*

*Lily. Truly. That's why I'm pretty and
romantic, a hope and a greenhorn. That's
why I fell headlong in love with Nagel.*

That's why he left me.

Mrs. D. He was a flop.

Lily. I know that now.

Mrs. D. You've learned your lesson then.

*Lily. Thanks to you and the society's
charity left nothing but failure.*

*Mrs. D. Well, now you might be able to
find yourself a real man.*

Lily. Like Ned.

Mrs. D. Hold your tongue!

Lily. (sings)

Lily. Ned, my urbanatty father.

Who runs his home but once a week.

*Who loves the theatre and its women,
nothing.*

*Who wants him to wash and eat and
sleep.*

*Lily. I thought you would be learned your
lesson by now.*

*Mrs. D. How do you know? I haven't
had time all the time. You should complain
about society-monger rules. I have had to
ensure the presence of a happy marriage
in society itself.*

*Lily. Even in the event of failing the
marriage itself?*

*Mrs. D. Better late than never.
Song:*

*When will we women escape from our
chains,*

*Toosie's the gallo's office and romance,
When will we ignore the drudge of
agriculture?*

*And cease to kiss the puff's whose
highland's past?*

*Lily. (singing) Look at Mrs. Coop,
mother of seven, shackled to the mangle,
and the oven while her husband bounces and
leap-frogs around the room.*

*Cue on Mrs. Coop, my favorite program
Liberating us the mangle.*

Mrs. Coop sings:

Days are turning the mangle

Until we write in black

While a dragon's a dragon

To snare tarts in Tucson.

Friar:

*Mrs. D. And Mrs. Park, wife of our Chief
Secretary. Look at her, childless and lone,
shredded in a shawl reduced to pottering
around her garden, parading sedately for
titles, feeding her hysterics, and revering
her botanical specialties.*

Cue on Mrs. Park, in her garden.

Mrs. Park (sings):

Some more oats to make Peter park.

Some carrots to make Peter blue.

— Tired.

My husband's breath is a perfumed stink.

There is a smell of charmin in my bed.

Friar (to Mrs. D.) Scold?

Mrs. Park. Unconventional marriage.

*Mrs. D. (singing). Miss Helen Hartnett, a
suffragette and social parasite, a figure of
fire who, for example, was mocked by so-called
temperance at a recent dinner.
Naturally she was the only woman there.*

*These amateur logicians cast far over the
guitar and returned just in time to lead
Voltaire.*

Miss Hollister (sings):

All spank them I in back

They're enlightened, of course.

They think I'll treat their pack.

They like their freedom of course.

So do we. We have a brain and mind and

back.

*Why shouldn't we be free, then to think,
feel and look?*

Laurette. All power to the contrary.

All trumpet!

You! Why shouldn't we be free,

At home and in the streets.

*In the theater, university and government
seat.*

*Free from social and intellectual tyranny,
Free from an ailing muscle and sinew?*

You! Why shouldn't we be free?

We're no better than Engers in the house,

We're no purer than our vice country,

Our mouths and bits over the home.

*In droughts and depressions we saved the
Lorraine?*

You! Why shouldn't we be free,

Through the moffins off our mouth,

Equality is a joke in the Democracy.

Where bulls stand with bullock the cow,

We'll stop no longer and stand up to you!

TEMPERANCE-SUFFRAGETTE SCENE

*The company enters with banners upon
which are written up and down the
theater singing.*



SONG FOR A SOBER CHRIST

Waiting to Die! O Sober Christ
Oh Virtue and Temperance
We fetch Your light from door to door
With Bible, lecture and love.
Our arms well advance in strength
With Your encircling flag
We will defeat the Evil Devil
Repay all sinners and be filled.
We live that peaceful, noble land,
Here we will build Jerusalem.
Milk and honey will be our meat,
Subdue our neighbors.

Come, all Australians, march with us,
Endure no more sin,
Conquer the prostitute and pimp
Te-te-poo-poo of benders.

Repay all sinners and be glad,
The Day of Judgment is at hand
Enter in our Sabbath schools,
We want a sober Christian land
Repay all sinners and be glad
Tame drunkenness on a dragnet
The Holy Bible is our book
Subdue and work our sheet.

Mosse: From time immemorial, habits and passions, brutal beverages have capped and dragged the will of man. Who was the criminal and downfall of Augustus? Nero? Charlemagne, a champion soldier, died glistening in his garments of effete — debauched treason. The King of France, these stupid prostitutes, were mere shameless mothers of impious fiends. Many a pecked and impotent royal corpse has been borne down the streets of scented Paris. To this day the consumption of spiced alcohol is a Roman Catholic and Papal perversion. Search a week and you'll find a reverend Whistler the priest, Pope, parsonically called Pius, whose purple robes are so coloured from the grape-juice that perpetually oozes from the pores of his skin skin. Is a little wonder, then, that his pronouncements on celibacy, are theings of an infantile, a blotted bushytail?

Chorus: Mosse: Rishmore is the god of the Irish. It is a Catholic weaker, a goliath containing of the brain, a black plague in their souls! We must unite to fight the creeds and cults of these satanic superstitions. Endorse the battle! Abolish beer! Ban all religions and breweries! (Chorus) Arrest all mechanics! Confine them in the asylums!

Chorus: A drunk drops up and utters: Mosse: He is dazed and grogged.
Mosse: Thank you. I am apologetic for that extremely incident. The partition boy today has been advised not to go into the gutter whence he came. Our final speaker this evening is the Chief Secretary of Victoria, Sir Wallace Park, who has magnanimously agreed to give us the meeting with his presence.

Park: I can assure you all that my trusteeship officers are at this very moment in time clapping the notorious Mr Corrigan in irons. I stand for law and order. I stand for decency and high moral standards in the community. Cheers!

I thank you. It has been my policy as Chief Secretary to come down, with uttering severity against tobacco dispensers and drunken disreputable. As you are well aware, these legal entities毛主席 rapidly ruin countless of moral degeneracy, thievery, thuggery, maiming, animal maiming, inefficiency, worms, even insanity in our civil law-abiding streets! Furthermore, it has been my personal concern ever since, to stamp out all sources of the flesh in this colony. To this end I have strict censor and confiscated numerous local and imported USSR, Chinese volumes which were purporting to be political, obscene, and corrupt, our chaste minds. This very year I have banned personally five classic Gay Luciferian gusty of satanic delusion. Their backs were like raw meat!

Cheers.
I thank you. Furthermore, those brothels have been closed down, the whores have been dashed with carbolic acid and dispatched to the core of religious retribution, where they lie honestly at the mangal and bon. Timothy Oscar Wilkes has been thrown into prison and banished to the edge of death. If I had my way, they would all be destroyed!

Cheers.
Ladies and gentlemen, I can proudly declare that adultery, abortion, infidelity, fornication, buggery and venery are now in the decline!

Cheers.
Melbourne is now a decent and delicate city. Her streets are pristine and temperate. Her citizens sober and virtuous. Our sons and daughters, abused and outraged in the past, can look forward to an epoch of innocence and equality. God save the Queen!

Cheers. They all speak and sing up before leaving. Sir Wallace Park at a table.

Last two stanzas: Song for a Sober Christ.

THE BROTHEL SCENE

Corrigan enters as a waiter. He farrer round sets up the scene perhaps. Still drunk.
Pork (after a while deposited): Corrigan!
Corrigan: Sir Pork! the state is yours to beg.
Pork: To what?
Corrigan: To what.
Pork: Give me a drink.
Corrigan (sitting down): One bighead.
Pork: And something to eat.
Corrigan: Superbly!
Pork: What's it to him?

Corrigan: Or perhaps a New-Born amore derived in bacon nests.

Pork: Food!

Corrigan: I can recommend the gravy, Square.

Pork: I need none. Corrigan:

Corrigan: A ham sandwich?

Pork: Bring me a roast of pork. Two legs. A roast. An upper, covered with potato, pumpkin, parsnip, pomegranate, and lollings of Mackellaran jelly. To be followed by dumpling, cream, and toothpicks. Harry! Don't forget the port is red Portuguese and black is red.

Corrigan: I shall return. See Mosse. (To the audience) With a gulf of the past. My thoughts and fears.

SONG OF SIR PORK

I am Sir Wallace Park,
In public I am a pig,
Be Christian in my talk,
In private I am a pig.

I feed the orphans,
With monotonous words
And righteous regulations,
The poor goat-likeards.

I pass a million pounds
And trashed as many cracks
I am fed by the maids
And I am off passing checks.

I have a wife and body,
She gives me the bland they;
I have all Cheeks, and Yods
That have their coloured dots.

When I die I'll lie flat,
Put on Henry the Eighth
They'll hold me in a vat
And tell the soap to eat me.

I don't believe in Hell,
But in Heaven I do.
Up there I'll do as well
As any Moody Jew.

Corrigan enters bearing (over) a huge cask of wine. Pork snatches it from him. Corrigan draws Pork about the waist in corseting tight and holds over his head. He belches and grunts in a purring fashion.

Corrigan enters bearing the same preposterous pig-like pig. With macerated food (over). Sir Pork snatches and grunts in a diabolical. He snatches the food, eats it with gusto etc. in the most obscene and disgusting manner.

Corrigan snatches insanely
Pork (after a while, becomes襄冠) I'm here!
Corrigan: No.
Pork: Why not?
Corrigan: Don't ask me. Ask Madeline.
Madeline: Suspicious, course, wearing a feather hat etc. and a craggy at a parish right. Pork goes on.



SONG OF THE BROTHEL-KEEPER SUSPENDE

Though I'm wild and a fiend for
Fool occasional! Be on my back
When the work comes thick and fast,
I give some gentlewoman a ring
To help to pass the time
And the Government
Keeps the wolf and Salves from the door
Helps pay for another inexperienced
 lady.

¶ **Ruth**
Up at Lombard Street in our clean hotel.
We point ourselves on rated clientele
We pride ourselves on having hair and
 sliding vaginas;
Strong enough to squeeze the bear down
 the biggest name!

Members of Parliament
Our establishment frequently frequents
Here they come to dip their wicks
For young the sin with their walking
 stocks.
Release their passions for a great
 part from exploit and lies,
Free from their wives, and daughters
In perfumed and pillow'd quarters
Up at Lombard St. etc.

Solicitors, architects and doctors,
Such to deals of shorn and law and taxes,
Come here for relaxation and enjoyment,
And to do their bit for human interest play
 stocks.

Speculators, and business men,
Known or unknown, expert,
Officers of our Army come here in
 regiments
To engage in gamblers and amateur
 entertainments

Up at Lombard St. etc.
Inside there presented a sita.
Bills and acts are all decided in scores,

Lederhand deals in property are
 negotiated
And fat percentages extracted
For we work within the Law
The Chief of Police is our chief bell and
 babe.

You may have for the right to practice
The Government forgets our taxes
Upon Lombard St. etc.

Park (to Madame) Whore! Lulu!
Madame: Still squatting, Sir? What is
Corporal: I bat about.

Park: I can stand impudency
Madame (suspiciously): I'm here
 Pence.

Park: Lulus cost here
Madame: I very expensive.

Park: Come over here, fat ass!

Park (chases) *Wombar Suspender catcher*
her and forces her to the floor, kissing her
etc. Corragan kills the place and draws the
gas. *Fool*, etc.

In Park, *wants* *Fool* America has done
and presents to April him Thomas Best
etc.

Bent: What's going on here?

Madame: Sir, *Wombar* has just attacked
My fresh boy, Mr. Bent.

Corragan: Bent! Tom!

Bent: It's Party. Are you mad?

Park: Never been so mad. Thomas.

Bent: Should I say apologize?

Park: No leads to here.

Bent: I came along recently to seek some in-
formation from you. I know you did best
in terms. I have a most lucrative proposi-
tion to put to you.

Park (surprisedly): *Lorraine!*

Fool: Very.

Park: Out of it.

Fool: I'd much rather talk privately.
This desk place at home.

Park: Over here then. *Bedroom*. Tom
They walk to one side. Tom talks right to
Madame but over again to overbear
their conversation.

Park: What information would you want?

Fool: I wish to know the size of the one
bridge projected to cross the Yarra.

Park: None.

Park: I know you know.

Park: Part of all what your proposition?
Fool: It involves the purchase of all the
land on either side of the Yarra. I will
establish a special company to deal with
the ex. interests. I need your co-
operation. Are you still attached?

Park: Very.

Park: *Whores* in Park's ear for a few
Bent comes closer to her and looks at her.

Park: Excellent! To start work on a
big thing in the morning. All agreed!

Park extends a hand to shake. Park refuses
to shake.

Park (walking off): Agreed.

Lulu comes.

Park (grabs) *Lulu*.

Lulu: *Wombar*! The people. Park chases her, catches her
and makes her to the floor. Park leaves.
Wombar Suspender catcher *Tomb* the
Chief of Police arrives in uniform. He is of
a short, plumpish, even jocular deport-

ment.

Madame: Superintendant Tomb, who a
plasterer?

Tomb: I cannot tell be.

Madame: I have something quite novel in
store for you this evening.

Tomb (approaching): Who?

Corragan: A wild corpse.

Madame: A chocolate creature!

Tomb: About time.

Madame: She is a sweet little lassie.

Tomb: I'll right her in two.

Madame: No you won't.

Tomb: I have a dandy like a boxer.

Madame: Don't I know that?

Tomb: She's not fit!

Madame: Only in the correct country

Knock pad and beaten.

Tomb: A good pad, you say?

Madame: Antisupper.

Tomb: Where is this boozing?

Madame: Room for two. She wants you.

Tomb: Good. A whisky. Corragan on the

double.

Corragan (turns): One double for the

website. (Squeezing out) one website

on the double... as good as anyone

on the straight... or off on the cards.

Bent (approaching Tomb): How are you

this evening, *Milord*?

Tomb: Not bad, Tom.

Bent: You'll be pleased to know that the

Highgate subdivision was most successful.

Tomb: How much?

Bent: A lot.

Tomb (approaching): How much?

Bent: How much? Oh, sir, ha-ha, of course,

for you sir, Mr. Howard.

Tomb: Choke-dead.

Bent: Twenty.

Tomb: Thirty.

Tomb: Thirty. Ouch.

Bent: All right. Thirty.

Corragan (approaching): Here's your

whisky, *wife*... —

Paul: *Give Corragan* viciously and *screws*

you to the floor.

Tomb: Get me another one, without the

lip.

Corragan gets up and exits.

Tom: Well done, *Milord*. He's been

bagging for that.

Tomb: Can't trust the Irish.

Bent: They're a bunch.

Tomb: *Push em in tight*.

Bent: *Push them tight*.

Corragan (approaching): Here you are sir

Tomb (taking steadily). That's better.

Corragan: Thank you sir.

Corragan *wanders off*. James Moore

comes.

Moore: Are you drinking alcoholic liquor,

Mr. Superintendent?

Tomb: I am.

Moore: Don't.

Tomb: If you say so, sir.

Moore: I do.

Tomb: Very well. Corragan?

Corragan comes up. Tomb takes the

whisky to his face and holds just the

right glass.

Tomb: *Ring the bell*.

Corragan leaves with the glass.

that makes us here but now see Sir Phosphorus Sewer who is carried in on a litter. Some where outside in Sewer is extremely obese and carries a rifle.

Sewer Hold a right there, Bent, or I'll ride you with this.

Murdered power! Pork, it makes me sick how Sewer laughs loudly like a hawk.

You're a drunk coward, Bent.

Madame! Sir Phosphorus, you shouldn't fight him so.

Sewer A mere jest, Madame.

Murder You've massacred Sewer.

Sewer I am. Search on the ship.

Murder A disgrace.

Sewer You're a bane and a curse, Murdo. Get away.

Murder You'll regret this, Sewer. I'll have you released. Not only will I compensate for the death of my son. I'll straighten up the goons. A fit and supporting work. A golden efficient road.

My career!

Sewer A figure of satanic. Campion!

Madame! Madame! Murdo, prevent him from leaving.

Madame! Don't go, Pines. You have yet to see our last entertainment.

Murder Entertainment?

Murder! A horrific dance.

Murder! Lycanthics.

Madame! Yes. Prudence is to reveal her gripes.

Murder! Friends?

Madame! The lot.

Murder! I'll longer.

Madame! Gentlemen! We now present for your delight and amusement a final but even more entertainment by none other than the delectable Prudencia!

Murder! Prudencia enters into coloured light shadows and steps to leave from the guests.

Sewer takes a while, raising his rifle. I'll get her. I'll get that prudencia in the pool. We free and kill Prudencia, Stevens and Bent. Pork meat and water.

Tomb Order! Order, please.

Madame! What are we going to do?

Tomb A faithfully set, Sir Phosphorus.

Sewer! Is she dead?

Madame! (shocked) Of course she is! What are we going to do?

Pork! Who's dead? (Staggering around)

No no! Lola! Lola!

Madame! No! Pork! It's Prudencia. Sir William one of my best girls. Warm & human to me.

Lola! Lola! Lola! Walk! Walk and sound.

Sewer! I shall remember you, Madame. Handicapped.

Madame! I should hope so! (to Pork) What are we going to do with her, all body? she has released what a mess, a horrid bloody mess!

Pork! Take them. Madame! Superintendent. Toss and roll! I will cope with the Sir Phosphorus, all complicit in the little matter of, er, her. What's your, Sir Phosphorus?

Sewer! Well.

Pork Excellent. Superintendent!

Tomb! Sir! A simple procedure. Mine no lies. Madame, Sir Phosphorus! Basic

covered up. Everyone out, and keep Sir Phosphorus, could we employ your laws to remove the corpse?

Sewer! If you can:

I'm going with great difficulty, assisted by Tom & Co.

Murdo! I must not here.

Bent! Me neither.

Sirius! Politicians!

Tomb! Let her be to the later gentlemen. They are Prudencia's people. Kill and bear her out. Mortalities and chapter. They all have exonerated Corregan who having killed Prudencia, breaths down and weeps.

Died! Sirius' notice of the age and Jerry doesn't wake up and down dogs in strength. Romeo anything, anyone?

Romey! Eh, Sir Syme. I've sold all our copies already.

Syme! How did you get in here?

Romey! Up the drain-pipe or

Syme! What a poor name!

Romey! Romeo Colleagues!

Syme! Somebody break?

Romey! Tis right.

Syme! You know I don't tolerate Irish members of staff.

Romey! Why not? I sell more eggs than any supplier in North Street.

Syme! There's the door, Rom. I'm busy.

Romey! The guy's poor.

Syme! (with a piece of paper in his hand ready). From 1886 to 1890 Melbourne was forced to endure the wild extravagance and irresponsibility of the Gibson-Dunkin Government. Their abuse of power and position was nothing less than prehistoric. Existing at these times, Melbourne's most general speculators, they presented wantonly to squander public funds and reduce the Colony's economy to rubble.

The methods employed were fiscal collapse, legislative discontent and flagrant political chicanery. Few members of this Parliament were innocent of Stevens' Even Deakin, that upright and fully radical, held directorial positions in highly questionable companies.

It came to the Boer War when in 1890 Deakin and Deakin were usurped by James Morris. Melbourne's Unseen and Obscure.

The news of Morris' ignominious retreat to England, after three months of imperial government, could not proceed with a clear voice if not for the pitiful state of the colony, where starvation, unemployment and disease are the order of the day.

Romey (on the streets). Read all about it! Morris' scandal! Get your copy of the Age! Morris' scandal!

A crowd gathers round Romey. They buy copies and chat rapidly.

Syme! Thanks, Rom.

Romey! (shouting) My Morris in his capacity as Premier of Victoria has appointed himself Agent-General in London. He has embarked for England in what might be termed unseaworthy funds.

Morris Morris' scandal!

Voice 1! Let's petition the Governor!

Voice 2! Attack Government House!

All! Yeh!

The crowd rushes about to where the

Governor stands.

Voice 1! We demand an explanation!

Voice 2! Morris must be brought back immediately!

Voice 3! Clapped in iron!

All! Yeh!

Gen. Leader and gentleman, the Honorable James Morris, weighed down by the recurrent and enormous tasks of Government, has seen fit to take up, at higher appointment. It is, I find, a species of vacation for him. I wish him well.

Voice 1! Vacations!

Voice 2! We're on our vacation!

All! Yeh!

We're all on vacation.

Having our holiday pay.

On levels of exhaustion.

Carefree, orderly and most inactive.

Morris! Read all about it! Shakes and Peterson! Blame it all on world-wide depression!

Crowd the papers and read!

Syme! Shakes was a genius that crafty enough to protect the politicians from prosecution.

Shakes (on stage, shouting desperately) Even if all our buttons are distance and centrifugal, and our physical residents had been a combination of the wisdom of Solomon and Salomon, we could not have escaped a time of severe depression, a world-wide depression, fisted upon us, by the Moths of... (Moths of?)

All! Our same time as Shakes' speech right now.

We're all on vacation... etc.

Morris! Read all about it! Peterson takes over the reins of Government!

James Peterson was both a brawler and a politician. With sufficient ability, he invented a constitution on the hoof and precipitated a catastrophic panic.

Romey! Banks collapsed! City banks close their doors!

Crowd hangs on the doors of a bank.

Voice 1! Open up!

Voice 2! We demands our money!

Voice 3! Hold down the door!

All! (shout!) We want our savings, we want our savings etc.

Syme! There was no robbery.

Romey! Not a trace.

Syme! McCormac & Fergusson were at their law office. Criminal documents, against her master.

Morris! I think she crept up to stage where Peterson announced Lazarus etc. Mr Patterson, could you help me? I've been out of a job for over a year now. Goods were sent and never paid for, so nothing but buried luggage and a picked up the streets.

Patterson! The Government is doing everything in its power to save the situation.

Morris! Listen, three of my kids have typhoid and are certain to die.

Patterson! I could wrap! You should pay more attention to hygiene in the home.

Morris! I hasn't got a home.

Patterson! Do you expect the Government to provide one for you?

Morris! By god, but

Patterson: Well?

Man 1 (angrily): All I want is a bloody job.

Patterson: My advice to you good man, is to travel with all possible speed to the Labour Office, where you will find a rich variety of lucrative positions at your disposal, our mail are honest, eager, well-disposed, sympathetic. (He turns about in sheer fury.)

Man 1 I did just. Walking along.

Man 2 I did too and got a job building the railway from 'Narrows to Goroke. The pay was nine shillings a week. After paying for food and rent, I sent my wife home one evening.

Stone: The Incomers were not the only ones to engage in the indignation of racing. The Government were quicksilvered and in Rosey Head (all about of Tasmania) near Launceston in Melbourne. Rugged crowds with the sterner English strikes. The unemployed march in London and Bushwood. Mounted police attack with batons. Our Sir Price addressing the miners. 'Let law and order out' — let the demands of law and order out so that the duty will now appear due to be performed.

Rosey: The winter of 1893 was the winter in Melbourne's history. It was left no relief organisations, mainly religious to date on two soup, bread and tea to long queues of cold and gaunt shapes of men down long quays. (Women and young girls, all out of work, joined the ranks of the men) a procession. Headbands and hats covered the silent and aloof in search of edible refuse. Buses were loaded down in gaunt, as drivers and heading down the Yarra. Melbourne was sick sick to the very core. (All of this can perhaps be construed by the crowd as propoganda effort.)

Rosey: Read all about it! Murdoch in Melbourne!

Mrs Stevens: What a shot! Harry and I? (She snorts.) What's hymn? (She walks across to Mrs Newman who is striking a fire.) What are you bating there?

Mrs Stevens: Nothing. It's just some... ah... rubbish.

Mrs Barnes (slapping the fire). Eh, what's that? (Harry) God, it's — it's — it's an infant! Burnt to death by Mrs Newman, a deserted wife unable to feed her under three children.

Patterson (shock, on stage): The Government is doing everything in its power!

The crowd have gathered round Harry and have bought paper.

Voice 1 (read): Baby-burn scandal.

Voice 2 (read): Mrs Knott, a baby-burner, murderer, several babies in her care and —

Voice 3 (read): The groves.

Voice 4: She put them in a chaff-bag and drowned them like ciptain.

Patterson: Judge (on stage): Mrs Gertrude Kaiser, I hardly find you guilty of the wilful murder of seven infants and sentence you to death by hanging.

Rosey: Hangmen release me hang Mrs Kaiser!

Hangman: I could never hang a woman. A

that, yes, but not a woman. It is against my principles.

Stone: He got very drunk and sliced his throat.

Voice 5: Don't hang Mrs Kaiser!

Voice 2: Conserve her sentence!

Voice 3: It's over her fault!

Voice 4: The Government created the conditions!

All: It's lamp light early, there nothing's to do. Patterson (cheerfully): The Government is doing everything in its power!

The crowd marches to banner the hanging of Mrs Kaiser.

Stone: In January 1894 Mrs Knott was publicly hanged by an eager crowd in the street.

Lots: (avertly) She switched for some minutes then blood and entrails ran down her bosom.

Patterson: Any woman who murders a child has forfeited her right to life. Any murderer is an ogre for whom hanging is kind a death. The working classes and liberals are detached at arm's length. The working classes have lost their spine. They slumber and sleep before Parliament in much of heedlessness. Their existence and importance is of great concern to the Government and others of the Church instead of fruitfully voting to improve their lot, they idle and sit on the streets. As Premier of this colony, I shall do everything in my power to see that law and order are rigorously maintained.

Sims (voicer): The political dependency of the Premier has caused up rebellion and resulting in this disaster.

Rosey: Patterson and Stevens control 'Turner-new-Patterson'.

Harry (from off stage):

Stone: A belated victory for democracy.

Patterson (from off stage):

Sims: (in a wail) The damage had been done. The city was a cemetery, dead to old age, decrepitude and Presbyterian senility.

Dumper: It was too late, oh nope. Park's last sentence set out to close down the debate on the ground of obscenity. Tombs personally shot the bullet.

Lots: I became a prostitute, and specialised in prostitutes. I gave birth to the past.

Sims: Melbourne's population then moved to below that of Sydney. Mel became a second city, a mere suburb on the fringes of Australia. Workers, writers, art painters and the middle-class left for Sydney, Tasmania and the West. The population just drifted away.

Country Melbourne: Town along with dialogue as before. They leave as.

Bugsy: Read all about it! Turner's tight ass upcountry Period of reconstruction!

Patterson (offstage):

Turner Officer: Hey son, why aren't you at school?

Rosey: Have to earn me keep.

Turner Officer: That's an excuse. You're under arrest. Name please.

Rosey: Kenny Gallagher.

Judge (on stage): Ronald Gallagher, when last sighted, I find you guilty of wilful robbery from school and sentence you to a

week's confinement, only to be released after fifteen strokes of the batch have been administered to your bare back. Blood and behaviour. Take him away.

Stone: Leaves singing softly the 'Goodbye Melbourne' song.

BOER WAR MONGRELS

Bugsy and Brother: Monks in plain ingreened clothing band. They're on their way.

Brother: Same does.

Bugsy: Ahman makes a hole wall to my

Brother: Come all together

We run and they run riding. They half-

running in galloping rhythm.

Oh we want a similar Monks.

And I am your man.

Coming in from one of the

Galloping rhythms.

And I am the brother.

Bugsy: I am no other.

Brother: Then happy Monks

And he's your man.

And I am your man.

And we're riding at.

From one of the galloping rhythms

To tend the Quince.

A helping hand.

To make a stand.

For God and the Empire.

Bugsy: That's our desire.

Brother: And be a poor man.

And I am your man.

That's happy and I am brother.

Monks.

And we're like this.

And we're riding at ...

Bugsy: Hey, he's taken a breakie, brother.

Brother: Haug.

Bugsy: An o'er. The horses won't mind up at.

Brother: An hour. We'll catch at least

when we get to the Goldburn.

They ride on - a narrative enters.

Narrator:

There was movement through the country.

For the word had passed around.

That the Boers were getting beaten by the

British.

Now the Aussies had a soldier for loyalty

to the Crown,

so they up and driven and rallied to the

cause.

Bugsy and Brother are at the Goldburn.

The shot was out and out. Great arc.

There was among the broadsides a

Kitterman named Marion.

Who with her brother lay awhile by

Goldburn's camp.

They'd ridden hard since breakfast, so

much Melbourne was their plus.

And on the steep young Brother had this

dream.

Over in a ribbons place dangerous and

dangerous? Miss Australia. Very

Ma. Hong-Hi, Japanese Australia's
cover: Miner Blackbird.

Gunner: Right, right! Mr Hi, I'm
Gunny. Now, we friends call me
Pucker-Apple? She chuckles briefly with a
piping, piping mouth. Pucker-Pucker
sucks? I thought you can all stop
laughing. You have to be Australian to
get that one. Anyway, that is me Kanaku
culture. G'Day Mate! (Shows and flings
over) Wodonga fancy a cup of tea, Mr
Sister?

Sister: Ahhh-hahaha-ha.

Gunner: Ah, come on, one's per finger
about per Mateo?

Sister: I must accept your hospitality.
Ahhh-hahaha-ha!

Gunner: Good on you.

Show about from Gunny's bottle.

Once You-fella, Hong-Hi, drinker bottle
belongs me!

Hong-Hi: Beer and shanks from Once
You-fella. They all shank and shank.

Hong-Hi: G'day mate! G'day, very good,
make me really drink me like very
much, very strong, me like you very
much.

We been to last Gunny.

Once you-felling? You-fella go alongs
this — lady belongs me all!

Hong-Hi: Me very silly. Miner. Very
dumb.

Gunner: Do you like Australia, Sister?

Sister: No.

Gunner: Why not?

Sister: Bad country. Bad people. They
kill me. Only was my car.

Gunner: Australia's a rough state. It's the
Australians that stuck.

Sister: They kill all your people.

Gunner: They hasn't finished yet!

Gunn: Big when Quantitative goes taken
all over my brothers. Strachan alongs
me. Me run away, me distract too.

Show (to Gunny): You must kill too.

Gunner: Na, we an't like that.

Sister: Verybad. You will all die

Gunner: I know. (Fists) Hey get a pink
st. Hampy! (He is swinging around
drunk and giggling.) He's shattered
already. Aaa and you strachan. Come on,
Show, drink up. (Show drinks) That's it
(To Hong-Hi) Come on, Ahmed-Lips.
How about a Cultural dance?

Hong-Hi: Show's in Chinese fashion, so
on.

Once You-fella a whilst. Me like show, on too.
Me leg up and down on Kanakacade.

Gunner: Coffee a whilst. Come on, Sister,
show, as the Afghan marimba?

Show: Shows as an Afghan style. Gunny
your shows and dances is appropriate to it.

The music is a future complementation of
style. The dance and music need a future,

with the four dances that linking arms
and moving over a very general provision
of the below with different, measured
advancement.

I have a northern country,

A land of sweeping plains, etc.

Brooker: Jesus!

Show: Bloody!

Brooker: Show, the cross and set your
self!

Bugoy: Show me over?

Brooker: What are we shipping out for?
There's enough Burns and their Zulus here
to have a long fight now. Where you
all going from, eh? South or through
South Australia, did you? I tell ya
Nipper, the sooner they isolate the country
the better. Only way to keep these fellas
out. Which of you — if any — can
speak the Queen's English on the un-poles?

All: Well do.

Brooker: Good a time?

Hong-Hi: Me honourable Australian
culture Lookin here, an habba papers.

Gunner: Hey Ocho (I know her by), he
wants to see your credentials.

Brooker: Jesus, Cadbury Creek, I don't
want a goddamn message card, all I want
to know, where's I volunteer?

Show: Volunteer?

Bugoy: Yeah! Volunteer! (Shows up)

Show: Ah, is the English sentence? "A
young man who was not one day sailing as
was his custom when, on turning the
corner, he came face to face with standing on
a scaffold, an earnest young officer of the
Crown urging the people present to
volunteer for service in the far-going cor-
nermen of the Empire."

Bugoy: Exactly.

Brooker: Yeah! Please! You heard there's
a war at? What's the reason? Didn't you
blacks read the *Town and Country Journal*?

Show: I was?

Gunn: Me no fight white-fellers you

Gunner: You used a, Once You-fella.

Show: A war! That's very bad news. My
cared out like this one as a step of the
desert carrying guns for the British in the
Sudan. Me not like responsible as captain of a
step of the desert carrying guns for the
British in the Sudan. Will write for the
Nellie when any old they. After be with
you! (He comes) Show show body ate
fairy?

Bugoy: Cowards! Foreign biff!

Brooker: You see that? You throw open
your doors — you read them like your
teacher — you treat them just like that —
and when the chips are down what
happens?

Bugoy: They do the dirty on you.

Brooker: Yeller, they are, class through

A bloody sort of right like. *Negro*
comes on talk a no — collecting for
show.

Suzanne: Give now, here's your dinner
more generally and help us to erect a
memorial of Adam Lindsay Gordon. Here you

are. To the memory of Adam Lindsay

Gordon — Brighton's own — help us to

erect a statue by public subscription.

Brooker: A great honours.

Suzanne: You just! You wouldn't

believe half the things he said.

Bugoy: Haha! He was a great honours.

Suzanne: Thank you, thank you.

Bugoy: Get up a cross on the top of the no —

or just through onto the Nellie's hand
negative positive, mow up off.

Bugoy: Hey!

Morrison: Fine.

Brooker: Where does a man volunteer for
the South African War?

Suzanne: Never heard of it.

Bugoy: None of these cows have been
reading the *Town and Country Journal*.

Brooker: I can see that he is myself!

Morrison: Now, wait on. Volunteer eh?
Come a night, cart you a lot. Now, I
asked for a couple of quid I might just be
able to squeeze you on to the boat, like
the like of it blacky. I've got some contacts
Get me?

Brooker: Here's five. Can you do it?

Morrison: Follow me.

Exit Morrison. The howl of a dog. A half-
a-pool of light. Mysterious, the *Journal*.

James: What you think this was, eh?
The blood-curdling howl of a dog on the
Roaring High Plains? Wrong again! The
piano. The piano is the watch dog of
democracy. See, Narrator?

James: Turn up a road! Narrator is a dog —
— running at the beach — with a
paper wrapped round his back! I notice now
a shark.

James: That's a good boy. Only hope we
don't see any red herring. You know what
dogs are like with红色 — that one's
mad on the herring! (He has grown
angrier) *He* type! ("October 1889" — the
Beer War begins. In the months that
follow, the Boers invade Natal and the
Cape Colony, set up rebellion across
British territory, and besiege the garrison
towns of Mafeking, Kimberley. They
resist all British attempts to defeat them —
in fact, they crush British in the field,
and establish themselves in the eyes of the world
as a mighty imperial power fuelled by a
boiled of Beer fermans.

Enter Miss Australia clutching a
photograph of Queen Victoria.

Miss Australia: And fast.

James: Never never never hear.

Queen Victoria: Another dear.

I'll send about hundred brace Morris.

And some few Diggers to lead a band.

Oh help, help, somebody help! (She dashes
around and fro)

James: In the shores of power some of
the most intelligent, astute and
opportunist, who cling to their pet politicians
like this, created a new aristocracy, saw a
great chance of making political capital
out of the war. They gathered into conf-
ference.

Miss Australia: Who am I? Oh, do something,
do something! Ladysmith has just been
bombed! (She goes) I do so hope she'll be
all right.

A hand comes from the water — they
search.

James: Finding a member of parliament is
not such an easy task. It involves a
through search of unsinkable bars,
bracelets, neck-tracks, chains — even
parliament itself! One enterprising group,
though, managed to locate their man and
arranged a swimming rally on the steps of
parliament.

Some enter heroes in the MP. One appeals
to crowd.

Actor: Calling all able-bodied brave young men — John Bull wants you! Do you seek adventure, fun and frolic in another climate? All these and they too? Then you are the man for us.

Narrator: But look! Buggy and Breaker in *The Bush* adopt a recruiting-poster manner — the others copy the MP's poster position.

Narrator: Hear that? That is the place. Come, you thinking there's a good many people attempting to volunteer, don't you — the war, recruitment applicants will have to come — (Breaker puts his arm around) You get what I mean. Good. I must say your patriotic feelings remained.

Buggy: When it comes to the war-cry, the people of Australia know what their duty is.

Breaker: Not only that! We'll put it all back.

Narrator: What's that? How?

Breaker (gives great Narrator): You've given me fire, you may as well stick a cat.

Actor: Good. Get this important news release. "MP rushes to Britain to aid Ludd and order invasion. Park advocates tank invasions to crush Berlin — note that an Australian contingent by now immediately. Park is a man of action. Where others sit down and ponder, he seizes the initiative." We expect to be reading that in this evening's paper.

Actor returns to MP. A crowd gathers. Buggy and Breaker leave. Narrator is to remain.

James: Do they think the press, the watchdog of democracy, will be satisfied with these press statements? No. The press will assess the position and make up its own mind. Eh Britannia?

The dog barks. MP adds another speech.

MP (reading from their press): Just by the way, J. Britain is at war and we in the State of Victoria want press men enough to do something about it! Agreed! We Victoria men must seize the initiative in man of action, not sit down and ponder. We must show these buggered Sydneysiders the way!

Crowd: Too right, etc. No pacifying around.

MP: Does the State bear the Queen's name for nothing?

Crowd: No. Melbourne should give the lead.

MP: Are we going to show her and the rest of the Empire how much we deserve that appellation?

Crowd: Of course we are!

MP: People think we are down-at-heel. They think we haven't recovered from the crash of twenty-two and can't clean them. Let's show them differently. Let's show them by seizing the legend, legend and best-equipped fighting force to Britain's aid. This sort of the business can manage!

Crowd: Yeah!

MP: The men with Britain are the men of blood!

James: Oh will he anyway.

MP: She's fighting for her life.

James: How can that be? For her life — against a few hundred poorly trained German tanks?

MP: We are bound to Britain as children to our parents. Britain is a father and we are his sons. Britain is a mother and we are her daughters. To fight for Britain is to fight for yourself, for your very own family.

James: Anyways with the slightest drop of correct blood in his veins ought to be enough for Britain.

MP: Why — whom oh? I add you — whom it protects us from the threat of an Asian invasion? Wilson and Japan holds the Japanese, the Chinese, the numerous Burmese hordes in check? We wouldn't last as long were Britain to sever her links with us.

Breaker: Half-right, not bloody right for I'm bid enough already! Aren't there Wogs enough in the country already, lowering the standard of living and putting white men out of a job? I tell you ... They just come from the Treasury Gardens and there's more Bongs there than garrison!

Crowd: Yeah!

MP: All the more reason to strengthen the bonds between Britain and ourselves, not weaken them by ignoring her call for help. It has been a dark week for Britain — a dark time for us. But, then, what perpetuates right will fall across the land of ours if the fanatics march around our ears. Civilization will be too basic, remember. The land of liberty and light will be no more. The dogs await you —

Narrator: I don't want to go, I don't want to go ...

MP: To sacrifice is the act of a traitor.

Crowd: Shut that trash up, or else we will.



They Stromer the Senator. He questions about Biggs has rocked power.

Biggs: Listen, I let a happen, don't let the Empire fall to chat, and when and now I speak to you as an Anglo-Australian — *Senator:* That's *Possibly* safe for "I'm a Port."

Biggs: Britain is mortal danger. Stood by her in her hour of need. I beg you. All colonial peoples should look to her and *Senator:* Are you going to?

Biggs: Sir? We want to win, don't we?

Senator: Would you know it? First to sign on to her last to go — the life-blood British government!

Sgt. (using the platform): Listen! If you know Biggs, you'd understand that only with his love of Australia can the war in South Africa be won. But, as for an Anglo-Saxon being a race of talkers not doers, what nonsense! Who was it turned this country in the first place? People of Anglo-Saxon stock. Everyone here now — if you want to trace your line of descent, where would you end up? Back home in the Old Country? *Senator:* I'm not a man to be sentimental. I see a man to bigger rays? before you. I say simply the Master Country is in trouble, she needs your help. I say simply we're in Australia, not England that was in this right spot. It is the British population would run in your support, man, boy and dog, back, stuck, and barrel. Let us link arms across the oceans, our hands across the seas.

MP: Hear hear!

Coward: Yea!

Senator: A pretty speech from an immigrant just about wrapped it up.

MP: Who, then, is for us, who will volunteer to aid Britain?

Coward: We will.

MP: Those not for us are against us — clearly.

Coward: The blighters.

MP: If you can't wake up your mind, remember that you fight for both a day for your trouble!

Coward: Right!

MP: And now the exchange isn't favourable, is Africa that'll buy you the worth-of-goods?

Senator: What's a good business sir? It always had its price. But who's buying the bill for this one? We Australians talk about sacrifice, but what does it mean? Britain herself is forcing our men that live like a day. What are we contributing? Nothing. Are we out of pocket? Course not. What do we have? A few fools who should've known better. And that's right?

MP: *Sgt.:* It may be right. But it's heavy punctuation.

Senator: I don't want to do, I don't want to go.

MP: Is that a terror I hear bawling for his life — a coward?

Senator: Coward! Ha! What about you? What are you doing?

MP: I'm staying here and —

Senator: You hear that? *Sgt.* Said and said.

MP: But, as for the war effort, I am life's bawling at there; I am put my name stamp at His Majesty's disposal.

Coward: Honest! Well done. You are

MP: *Sgt.:* This can't be right. Who authorised that?

Adm.: We haven't usually done that — we've only used we have.

Another Adm.: If pushed, we'll say we issued the initial buildings?

MP: Well done lad! *(To crowd):* All right then, the way, hurry up, no dallying. You get five Bob at the song. The *second* singer up.

MP: Oh, of course I had my come over — if only I were thirty years younger and the gods hadn't snatched my limbs, it would I were I condemned by my doctors to do nothing more dangerous than a boat, well a small one, and then on the high-backed commode. Oh, by God I'd give my right arm to be there with you — right-shoulder, shoulder-to-shoulder, that's comf'able, and so and, we'd make a mess our glorious destiny. As it is, I promise you this all your wants — spiritual or material — shall be taken care of. With your father's great power?

Musicians: A fine volunteer.

MP: Not of us!

Soldier: My wife.

MP: How old?

Soldier: Twenty.

MP: Beautiful!

Soldier: You and pretty in a picture.

MP: Just as long as she's more than a picture — all right, all with you. Did you get the address?

Adm.: Yip.

MP: Then what are we waiting for?

Adm. (with a gesture of disgust): Listen! *(With a gesture of disgust):* And away off there, what did I — the hard-boiled journalist — the watch-dog of democracy — the unashamed — what did I publish?

All good men should rejoice to see bad and evil exposed. Park bay to Britain's aid. There can be no doubt that an Australian contingent should suffice to subdue the Boer. Park, the man of action, shows us the way. "Worse still, I followed Higgins when he attacked the wisdom and morality of the men in Parliament.

Adm.: Higgins appears in body of the audience.

Higgins, I don't care what the press does to me reputation — that war was a massacre, a tragedy of justice. I trust, and

I'll appear and stand Higgins.

MP: 1. Take him, Higgins.

MP: 2. You're backed a horse.

Higgins: I have a mandate. When before the election of North Melbourne, last February, I was asked whether or not I would support a proposal to send a second contingent to South Africa, I said no, and was returned by a majority larger than any other Member of this House.

MP: 3. There were other issues.

Higgins: None so important.

MP: 4. Why don't you go and fight for the Boers yourself?

Higgins: Because there is more to be done here, unfortunately, at this very House. The Boer War is a corrupt war of attrition conducted by invasion and brutality against forces, women and children. Our only reason for supporting such a right is

that it is Britain's, and we follow like sheep, or rather, tame.

MP: 5. We might request Britain's protection in the future.

Higgins: Is this the price we have to pay for that was true saying? Britain ecosystem and freely bargain with our potential enemies. She might not come running to our aid as quickly as we wish to her. Regardless of all that, the unnecessary and frankly oppressive nature of this war requires that we oppose it. The Boers after all only seek freedom and the right to run their own country in their own way. I only regret that the atmosphere of this country is so hysterical, prejudiced and ruling that I will have long passed on before it will be conceded that it, possibly, was right. They laugh and howl here about *Parliament*, etc. *MP's* become part of the *disorder* *disorder* *disorder* in South Africa. One chose a slogan.

Soldiers: Free Breaker, free Breaker!

1. General comes on to the court martial. Breaker a draught in by another British Officer. Cheers.

General: Her Majesty's Imperial Army versus Breaker Moran. Would the accused step forward?

Soldiers: Free Breaker, free Breaker!

General: Who is that seventh soldier?

Officer: Members of the Australian contingent to Moran is a great hero among them. Single-handed, he silenced the Boer gun placements, at Spion Kop.

General: I don't care what has been or how popular he is with these yokels. Shape forward, about 1. Soldier in the name of His Majesty! *(To me)* I warn you. More than all this nation will cream hardly against the accused.

Breaker: Shit! We're making it tougher for *General*.

General (to Officer): The damned political climate has strong against us at home. Horror and outrage over the women and children we, or detained in refugee camps and those killed with the burning of farms. These responsible must be brought to trial. Breaker Moran, do you plead guilty or not guilty to the charge of slaying Boer soldiers in the Transvaal's Blood River area?

Breaker: Guilty.

General: Did you or did you not set fire to farms, with their women and children, on that same day, the twelfth of December?

Breaker: But under orders.

General: Shut up the post!

Breaker: Kitchen ordered it.

General: Would you leave the court? And like poor assassins.

Officer: (With a smile) Come on, lad, and you go.

Breaker: And soldiers reluctantly leave.

Officer (to General): He was really acting under orders, sir.

General: I know that.

Officer: You are condemning insurgents, not revolutionaries.

General: Palace, politics, Caprice. You a rare man. Breaker Moran. You are sentenced to death. Execution to be immediate.

The Officer: *Breaker:* The General becomes the leader of the jury.

ripped (glancingly at the soldiers) when our men?

Bugle (ringing Breakfast). Oh no! The bandstands have disappeared!

General. All right, squat, squat! (They do so.) Present arms!

Bugle. I can't do it!

General. Have you anything to say, Miss? Speak now or forever hold your peace.

Brother. Australia will be proud of me.

General. Remember, lads, are for the joint military between the two syllables.

Bugle. I was i about. I'm his brother.

General. I don't care who you are, son. You are now under the command of the British Army. Five shillings a day. It's an order and your duty! (Laughs.) Your brother was excellent in carrying out unpleasant orders. Imagine how he feels, he your brother's brother.

Bugle. I know!

General. You will still fly above and a revolver and walk so behind! Bugle! I know that revolver aimed at the back of your neck, Private, and if you win a promotion at Morris's factory, when you find, I shall shoot you for insubordination! (Laughs.) Take aim! (Pistol.) Fire!

The bugler breaks off. The General walks up to the body and fires a short burst.

General. Well done! Morris, after a round of raps, you will be in charge of grievances! Quick march!

They march out.

HOME SWEET HOME SCENE

Dad and Mum appear with ugly Norman gothicish arrows to it and there that (at end of course) as before some country. A lot of things have happened while you've been away, son. Did you hear the result of the second referendum? We're going to have Federation soon. I waited for you. That young Doctor — you know, Mum he used to the roundish sort of Gertie trade Street — well, he's already off to England. A Factor had in London talking to the Queen! What do you think of that, Norman?

Mum. Where's the apple-peel, Mum?

Dad. You should go see politics, son. With a record like that — medals won in games, the gift of the girls, a good head in your shoulders — Melbourne's going to need a lot of new politicians. Norman.

Miss Anna. Australia's born.

Miss Anna. Muthking has been relieved?

Dad. Did you hear that, Norman? Muthking has been relieved.

Miss Anna. (Answers again!) Muthking has been relieved! God Save the Queen!

Dad. Our Melbourne boys did that! (To the audience.)

Miss Anna. Muthking has been relieved! Hup, hup booooy!

People appear from all directions, a soldier comes from other place, with drums, hand-drums, hats and hats

Old ladies workers, office-workers, waitresses and little maids disappear. The crowd eventually breaks into *Ride Downunder*.

The Ghost of Peter Lark appears on stage. Lark (ghostly). Ladies and gentlemen! Silence please!

Piano.

Ghost (ghostly whisper) says: It's Peter Lark.

Lark. Ladies and gentlemen, I have further good news from London. The House of Commons, that Cornhill barracks, has just passed the Commonwealth Bill! (Cheers from the crowd!) It only remains for the Queen, God bless her! To Trustee herself, to sign the approval, and we will have Federation of Australia! One day we might, shall completely the status of England and become a republic. Federation, however, will do for the moment, and with that in mind, people of Melbourne, the soul of Australia, I give to you — Miss Australia!

Miss Australia appears on stage holding open one in front of her the Australian flag.

Lark. And the Australian flag! (Laughs.) Thank you, Silence, please, ladies and gentlemen. Allow me to explain the flag and its motifs. In the top left-hand corner, we have a Union Jack in conjunction (Cheers.) Which represents the blood, blue for cruelty and white for hypocricy! (Cheers.) An emblem of the double-headed eagle of the Southern Cross! (Cheers.) Thank you. My own creation. They represent, as you might have guessed, the six states of Australia. These pictures are (pointing to the top star) MATTERIALEUM.

Sixty and odd-crested chooks (pointing to the next) PHILISTINISM.

Cheers.

(Ghosts) INTOLERANCE. Our love of Australia!

Cheers.

(Ghosts) MILITARISM.

Cheers.

(Ghosts) RACISM.

Cheers.

(At lower end) And last but not least, supporting all the others — PAKISTANIA! (Tomatoe-sauce.) The crowd makes the stage and bows. Miss Australia steps off. They carry her down to the main acting area in a procession and circle round. Miss Australia sings. God Save the Queen, the Queen half of the crowd sing. I Love a Southern Country, the other renders Melbourne. Under will on their voices. Listen a poem. (Breaks.) The orchestra does not bear with the Marvellous Melbourne cheer. They eventually march off. Later disappears Marvellous Melbourne, then comes back for a while. Marvellous Franchise appears on the platform.

Franchise. Once again, ladies and gentlemen, it is Mortimer Franchise, your Master of Ceremonies. Sixty twelve years ago, I was with you in these very Exhibition Buildings, when set up a historical and

mark on Melbourne's history. Today is just such another landmark in Melbourne's history. Today is just such another landmark, even greater, if possible, than that of the Centenary of Federation. Three hundred years, ladies and gentlemen, have brought us history, much of it not of belonging to Melbourne and its citizens. The tide of history has, however, once again turned on our favour. As you all know, the Commonwealth of Australia was formally inaugurated on the first of January in this year of great grace, 1901. It was then decided that Melbourne became the seat of Government of the Commonwealth of Australia.

This was an apt and necessary choice. Melbourne has always been the centre of the Federation cause, and she is the only city in Australia with a Parliament House large enough to contain the huge Commonwealth Parliament. The Exhibition Buildings were the only possible choice for the坐uture today and the sun crept in to 10,000 people!

Today, ladies and gentlemen, we are to witness the opening of the first Commonwealth Parliament. For Melbourne, the capital of Australia, this is a moment of unparalleled achievement. The vision of our forefathers has been realised, our vision of the future is realised. Melbourne, the centre of a Pacific power — ladies and gentlemen, you, I can see them, dear Royal Highnesses, the Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York are approaching you, here they are.

A clatter of trumpets. The Duke and Duchess of Cornwall and York enter. They are followed by the Governor-General of Australia, Lord Hopetoun, and Lady Hopetoun. They enter. Following them are Sir Edmund Barton, the Prime Minister of Australia, and his wife, Mrs. Barton, the Attorney-General and his wife, Mrs. George Fisher, the Treasurer, and his wife, Mrs. Walter Frost, Minister for Customs and Excise, and Lady Frost. They all go up to the stage.

President. The Old Bloodred Throne, ladies and gentlemen.

The piano begins.

President. His Royal Highness, as representative of King Edward the Seventh, will now read the King's message and proceed to address the curb to the representatives of Commonwealth Parliament. He will then declare the Parliament open. His Royal Highness!

Daik. His Majesty has been pleased to consent to this separation, moved by his sense of the loyalty and devotion which prompted the generous self-sacrifice by all colonies in the South African War, and the splendid history of the colonial troops. It is His Majesty's earnest prayer that the Union, so happily achieved, may, under God's blessing, prove an instrument for still further promoting the welfare and advancement of his subjects in Australia and for the strengthening and consolidation of his empire. (Franchise and others.) I now declare this Parliament to be open.

Marvellous Melbourne, stop.



A strangely pessimistic assortment of desperate material

THE RADIO-ACTIVE HORROR SHOW

GARRE HUTCHINSON

The Radio Active Horror Show by John Russell Australian Performing Group, From Farnham Castle, Victoria. Opened 7 July 1977. Director, S. and Peter. Matt Welfare, Liza, Sharon Koch, Kerry Dwyer, Ursula MacLean, Richard Stephen.

The wheel turns. Optimists and pessimists take turns in charge of the western world's personality. Sometimes everything seems to be going well and the future stretches boundless to them of us, mankind totally capable of dealing with any social, technical problem that might crop up. Then comes the contrary for instance. The sun set on happy Victorian conquering innocence, frivolities and impatience. Wars were small, relatively efficient and useful in spreading love and joy. Everything got better and more灿烂.

Sometimes the rest of the world is at hand. Plague entry off the healthy Left is nasty, break and short. Murder and rape, sucking and slopping, torture and death. The Middle Ages. The thousand century.

Nowadays things have gone sour. At no time for 100 years has there not been a war somewhere. The rich get richer, the poor starve. Science, instead of temporally providing more and more answers has instead opened up more and more questions. The solutions we apparently have do not make very many people happy. The cities, supposedly the centres of civilisation, are dying. The countryside is poisoned. And in thirty years the shadow of total annihilation has fallen across.

Pray study eschatology. Just guessing whether of the end of the world or the coming of the New Jerusalem at a confluence of both have generally been based in religion. Mankind would have very little to do with it, except to be sorted out on Judgement Day.

Now, the audience will serve as a direct result of our own efforts. It doesn't matter which particular mode you theorise about, encyclopaedic, the heroic, a host of new war, or perhaps the return of disease, these are self-fertilised parash-



rama. This duality metaphor is the image of the century.

So they say.

Science fiction writers have had a stranglehold on writing about the end of the world lately, science having given them enough scenarios to get off on. The theme is a hard mode to set in this fashion, always tilting towards the here and now rather than the hereafter. But where the here and now is the enormous political theme of disaster then work can proceed. On the screen, and in the theatre. The pessimism gains happiness through energetic expression of their views.

Thus the *Radio-active Horror Show* at the Farnham, devised by the cast and John Barnes!

The Australian Performing Group is a good process to do something in the direction — some would say that politically oriented, group developed, community based theatre is what they should be doing all the time — because the group has been heavily involved with contemporary politics since the beginning. Of the nation that is. Not only the issues but also an emphasis on free personal democratic right work. (I've often thought that a show might be developed around the meetings that take up so much of the APG's time. Perhaps the public should just be invited to a highly argumentative show, politics and art.)

However, too, through his commitment to the "theory of the moment" and his possible opposition to the idea of eschatological or millenarian themes brings him strange pessimistic dispositions to his art.

The *Radio-active Horror Show* is formally most akin to Rattner's *Golden Gloves*, that angry black piece putting religious, literary and Australian over one. That, and this show, are collec-

tions of sketches, notes and songs around their subject.

Which is Uranium and what to do with it, the bomb and what it will do to us, and a cast of characters and what they want to do. This show is not a linear expansion of a political line, but an off centre series of linkages and focus around the subject.

Thus we have an Astronaut (Ursula MacLean) who speaks of the "terrible waste" dying to get out and kill, start a civil war between her resource conscious and the busy and merciful, the sexual, sexual, sexual. Here is the intent to make that if they're gonna get me, I've gotta try and get them first. Chain.

Of course we have a representative of Late American Capitalism, The Puer (Willard Lang). He's good looking, and has been coaxed by uranium to fix Australia. He loves Uranium, War Games and as long as he's having a good time doesn't give a hoot for the natives.

There's a Scientist (Richard Murphy) driven crazy by the implications of what he's done — but what can be done about it now? He'll surely go down with the same ship we're on.

An Oppressor (Margot Nash) is a few spasms from *The Nuclear Days of our Nuclear Lives* regard most things as no Don Quixote, and whatever are new rocks and confidence.

And a Parent (Kerry Dwyer) teaching her child the fun of life, like the half-life of plutonium and how her children's children's children won't see the end of it.

For she already anticipated the coming of highly interesting and accurate, with sufficient points of view, and even humour, to sustain note of it for two hours or so and not four. For the unanticipated I would guess the whole thing would be mysterious and even efficient, and the three or four sketches that don't work dead boring.

For myself I found the *Terribles* basically morally repugnant and not even with the *Scientist* as a psychopathetic heart just about unsinkable. *The Nuclear Days of our Nuclear Lives* sequences with a nuclear cap, the scientist and her lover are explosive to a degree. What they are really about I don't really know.

However the poem about scientific responsibility — *The Fatal Sciences Is Mad With Us* — is generally moving, and Kerry Dwyer's sections in *A Nuclear Laundry* and teaching her child are terribly moving and funny.

All in all *The Radio-active Horror Show* is a strangely pessimistic assortment of desperate material which works at less than the capacity of the actors and writer.

A production that stays on the knife edge

ASHTON

ROBERT PAGE

Staged by David Rydger. Melbourne Theatre Company at Sir Martin's Theatre, Swanston. Mark Rydger, director. Steven Soderbergh, Colin Myles, Anne Lupton, Caren, Dr. Doctor/Surrogate/Carer/Dystopian supervisor/ambulance driver/Adoption Officer. Jim Phillips, Assistant Receptionist/Father figure/assistant adoption officer. Jim Friedl.

In a world baulked of over-population and concerned for the quality of life many couples choose not to procreate, but take away the possibility of choice in the matrix, the institution in the centre of David Ruckus' *Choices*, doctors and humans will go to diagnose, isolate, biologise, methods of contraceptives, IVF, tablets, medications, abortion, caesarean and the pill have never been so many nor so sophisticated, yet the incapacity to conceive is a problem like cancer and the common cold for which no curative remedy has been found.

But, unlike the cold, which goes away, or cancer, which tells or is cured, but continuing to choices — it just goes on, not happening. Like Tom Stoppard's vision of death in *Rosemary's Baby* and *Guadalupe* are dead where one goes on and on not making a judgement. Anne and Colin, the couple in Ruckus' play, have reached the stage where the hazy contamination of the non-event begins them on the harrowing trail from speculation to specimen. Their desperation increases with the perplexing, expensive and undignified advice they receive — names dog conflicting positions (machiavellianly determined by a man with surgical needs), odd bafing of muscles (fascially named), sodium bicarb, douches, sperm and ovulation tests — but although finally cleared nothing continues to happen for them with monotonous, numbly repetition.

Then a down-Bringing dream of Mother "Non, vita, Creare Spuma?" A child is conceived and for a brief time life lapses its wholeness, suspicion and painless — the pure innocence of past or one then the other or over. They can feel their heritage fluttering in the womb beneath their fingers, but that brief hesitation in their childless yearnings comes to a slow painful end as Anne in three successive states to haemorrhage and finally miscarriage, not one child but — with broken body — twin. And they concern her womb.

The chance of producing their own child now utterly gone they lie upon the adoption bed! Lights up. Audience parties rule from observer/suspicion to hopeful adoption as the agency officials all but callously dismiss this as a possibility. Colin

and Anne are considered accountable, she thought of playing "Mummy and Daddy" must be banished forever. And as presumably they had been forced by fate to exchange their love around trapping and domesticity from their careers in science and writing, so now the players of other forms of creativity must run from these jobs.

Colin goes over to Ireland for the funeral of his uncle shouldied in a horrid outrage. His monologue, too long and too late in the play, interrogates this theme of regeneration in their love — of the fertilising quality of love.

The only answer, for the Ultra-nationalists dismiss him of his own heritage created from the past, by the move to England he is isolated from the future by barrenness.

The opinion is venture: Anne in her final speech describes her apocalyptic dream where the child of an infidelity "take off your dead". The word from the agency comes. The prolonged non-appearance of their child is at an end, they must start to look for "whatever it".

Starkly the central metaphor sounds horrifying with meaning — from the fratricide eggs to IRA blood and death with the bibles, Matthes and Fyssen on the way. It's maternal power to nominate over and kill nicely.

Steve Nalen's set has similar ubiquity a fleabag background to the trainmen, berriedly confused stable hospital and modern bedroom. The cozy intimacy of the bed of home becomes the cold state of ultimate examination, an ambulance bed, and a platform for the adoption officer's chilly sermon.

The language ranging from pathy upgrain to lyrical flight requires a production that stays on the knife edge between normality and the odd and

clinical.

Mark Rydger and his cast of four hold this production with status debility. Lyn Carr and Tracey Mylne portrayed two individuals whose affection and closeness only remissively frays with the alienation that pervades their love. Though more of their speech is directed to the audience than to each other the sense of the strength of their relationship is never lost. Even individually, when Anne chats to the adoption officer, with a frankness that is only clearing of their issue, as their Island attitude to Colin's bewilderment, how she doesn't always like him, and doesn't always fancy him.

Both however show the strength of their relationship no so hot as "class"; to the off-beat, the specific is a master work of stage, iron.

Myles' short-holice Colin, quiet, sensitive and with a very touch that didn't jar much for laughs at the start, bags the increasingly bleak mood daily on check. The perfect foil for the more animated — yet less talky acceptance — of Lyn Carr's Anne.

Jim Friedl and Jim Phillips played their range of character, or rather caricature, parts — doctors, nurses, nationalists, road, even their neighbour — with a fine sensitivity. Rydger could perhaps have repositioned himself from the all-too-easy set-up of the medical profession and social services.

Tragedy is concerned with the separation of fate with lack of choice, and is the ultimate family. That the couple can't have their own children is tragic, that they can't adopt is a social problem. "What happens to us in the world has no relevance to anybody". The final group of tenors gives a poignant dignity that carries over from the internal mechanics he is the subject of as much of the play. While there a life hard a laugh.





Shakespeare and G & S in successful 'pro-am' productions

HMR PENALDRE
AS YOU LIKE IT

MARGOT LUKE

AS YOU LIKE IT by W.S. Gilbert and Arthur Sullivan. Gilbert and Sullivan Society of W.A., October 20, July, 1977. Director, John Wilson; Musical Director, Graham Weston. The cast includes Joseph Porter, K.C. B. Robert van Mackenbergh, Michael Cawson, Barry Prenter, Tony Walker, Robert McElroy, Roger Phillips, Bruce Robertson, Rob Davies, David Lakin, Bill Murray, John Wilson, Bob Becker, Karen Miller, Josephine Terry-Johnson, Helen, Sue Holden, Linda Ballinger, Anna Weston.

As You Like It by William Shakespeare Directed and designed by Raymond Daniels, produced by Bill Wilson. Opened 20 July, 1977. Chorus, Alan Fletcher; Adam, Michael van Staat; Oliver, Peter Ross; Charles, Neil Colfer; Rosalind, Wendy Beaumont; Celia, Shirley Willis; Touchstone, Keith Edmiston; Le Beau, Guy Penhale; Duke, Michael, Chris Williams; Duke Senior, Bill Daniels; As You Like It, David Langford; Lord Amiens, Bernard Curran; Jaques, Karl Zwink; Audrey, Alison Lucas; Sir Oliver Martext, David Lampert; Phoebe, Jane Robertson; William, Martin Rachall; Ali, Margaret Macleod; Hastings, Jean de Bois; Paul Hollingshead.

Every now and then the amateur-professional argument arises. Last year the complaint was an trend-and-farmer issue in an over-entitled profession was a first-rate actor who happened to combine two jobs successfully had a profession because he did not depend on his earnings from the stage? Did the present avoidance of the professional status of his colleague?

This year the rates is restored. Does the intrusion of one or two professionals on the province of amateurs invalidate their status? Nobody, so far, has raised any objections. In fact, of course, the part played by the specialist and professional organisations is crucial for appreciation. They run, and do, robust productions that are lavish in manpower and judicious in experiment in a way the severely budgeted professionals cannot afford, thus extending the range and appeal of presentation available to the theatregoer.

During August, Perth saw two notable examples of that kind: the staging by the Gilbert and Sullivan Society of *W.M.S. Fangler*, and Shakespeare's *As You Like It*.



It by the University Dramatic Society. Both of them were directed by distinguished professionals — both of them introduced some professional element among the actors.

The opportunity for innovation when dealing with Gilbert and Sullivan is, of course, restricted. Tradition is sacrosanct, but even within the accepted framework John Wilson made ample scope for personal reading. His specialty in dealing with a chorus is to create individual characters among them and so introduce among bars of business that liven up the score without detracting too much of the audience attention from the principals. Thus not only are the voices carefully differentiated, but the numerous intersts, costumes and sets vary in temperament according to extremes of more delicate and more aggressive shades of pink and are graduated in age, with one drag relation rolling on a shoulder.

One's feelings about Robert van Mackenbergh, the straight actor brought in from the outside, are ambivalent. His extravagantly drollish Admiral Sir Joseph Porter (shaker of the Queen's Noses), is certainly an original but he is a caricature in an old mold — eighteenth century rather than G and S. In a different way Raymond Lakin's grotesque Duke (despite its extremely serious and tortured, but rather sweetly twentieth century) is funny. Both of them seem to break the rule of light-hearted merriment imposed by the music, which insists that no master

what kind of realities are based at the theatre, everybody is playing games and the sensibly accomplished sleeping and dancing prove that it's all really very jolly.

So, despite the appeal of novelty, the warmth and enjoyment is still in the traditional virtues of G and S: the dedicated chorus keeping its job, the sparkle and absurdity of comic moments affectionately paraded, the bright-painful dirges by Lavinia Mabuse giving a pointed road signpost of the spirit of the piece. Vocally, Barry Prenter as Captain Corcoran is the most powerfully right for the occasion, and Terry Johnson, who has a most attractive voice and powerfully makes a charming actress.

As a consequence, added by slight allusion, there is a little-known Oberon-like creature, *A.S.P.P.* or Meneely Chastain's *Muscals*, avoided no doubt by large audiences out of any fury folder.

The revival of interest in the *Boycs* Operas shows a groundswell of public need — a tradition of uncomplicated enthusiasm, which clearly needs to be kept fresh by innovative touches to keep it from becoming.

Rory O'Dowd, in his capacity as Director of Business at the University of W.A. has a mouth-watering innovative production of Shakespeare at the rate rather than the exception, and he has found ingeniously minimalist way of making *As You Like It* relevant to his student actors and predominantly young audience. By employing a pattern of contemporary substitutions to achieve a correspondence between the twentieth century and timelessness that is on the whole successful and allows flexibility in accommodating the considerable range of ability in the group. The production gives out of a session of workshop training in which the actors were encouraged to "let themselves go in a fairly disorganized way". This has clearly paid off: there is a very high level of brio, memorised recall rate and a great deal of lively, free-wheeling display of talent.

Orlando the Bore, played by Alan Fletcher, is ingeniously the representative of today's generation — energetic, sensitive and dressed in dishevelled dress. (He has recently played a number of parts with the Hells in the Wall Company and in emerging as an actor to watch.) The sprawling Duke and his followers are blandly fascist, using torture and offering incentives with sinister overtones, while the banished Duke's merry band are careering in the forest, dressed in ethnic gear, playing guitar and banjo and consuming quantities of frost. Bill Daniels,

as their dead leader wears a permanent smile of bliss, which leads one to assume they are most at peace.

The girls start off in Edward's school classes c. 1930 but soon they are in the liberating flossy, Ravelloian (Wanda Denevan) down-girlyights' public prints and Celia (Barbara Sud) becomes increasingly Rambunctious in Edward's office. Her respect for her is less successful, because no recognisable content has been found for them and the rustics—Solvyn and Phebe, almost unison, and Audley under a cold, non-social chandelier, though both are based in. The distance, mostly left abominably short, is played by Keith Robertson with a rare sense of irony and dispassion, whereas David Zinberg's rear is turned into a wild television concentrate of an Irish priest with a hirsute, Gormley, the only comically early overstatement of a touch, the unregretful Marquis, representing Hymen, seems in part in all the company.

The single most arresting study is Karl Zwicky's Jasper, whose natural clothes are held together with tatters, who sports half a pair of sunglasses and chomps a distant, austral. This eccentric character dominates the stage, whether he gives way to his bittersweet melancholy or cavorts about in slaphappy manner. Oscar never exactly saw whether to condone him for so blatantly abusing the show or whether to be lost in admiration.

Whence ensemble playing is seriously attempted it works impressively and notably in the scenes involving Rosalind, Celia, Orlando and Feste. Here the actors achieve more than the sheer elaboration of the verbal battle, but also manage to deal with all the nuances of the sexual game resulting from Rosalind's successive disguises.

The actress set of houses and strong in a muted blinding. At their best the strings, dappled with green light, suggest ambiguity through forest leaves, at worst, especially when raised or lowered, the women backdrop creates like a gigantic fauna, at night.

The instrumental accompaniment, of guitar and star wars soft, though for some reason the songs struck me as less successful, neither bluespunk nor contemporary.

A fine balance between the frenetic comedy and the undertones of seriousness

MARFIELD TOWERS

CLIFF CELLAM

Marfield Towers by Alexander Bass, National Theatre Company, Hall of the Wall Theatre, Perth, Western Australia. Opened 21 July 1971.

Dorothy, Anne Neeson, Dorothy, Sue Russell, Miss Matilda (Caroline Randal), Francesco (John), Philippa Wilkinson, Edward Marcell, Steve Judd, Louise Russell, Peter Bowles, Jennifer Marshall, Ralph Taylor, Franca Mirella, Alan Piper, "Ira" (Bert Andrew King), Murray Prior, Margaret Fletcher, Anthony Marcell, Alan Cassell, Sue Russell, Dennis Miles, Merrin Goddard.

Anne Neeson's National Theatre Company in the Playhouse has been having, seriously speaking, a lean time as of 1971. The failure of the first production of the year, *Makarai: The Slave* during the Perth Festival (a failure partly the consequence of the spontaneous appearance of imported English local John Le Mesurier) set the pattern for a string of productions which, even if commercially successful, (plus a sorry publicity work) have been received as a decidedly late-war British by the critical establishment.

The reason given by the company to the Hall in the Wall theatre for a four week season of Alex Bass's *Marfield Towers* seems to have broken the spell. The production should surely the critics, and should certainly also do good business at the box office. It is difficult to know just why the particular production, while recent National Theatre efforts, should have achieved the coherence and lively vigour it has since the play itself is, as a play, no longer than others which have formed part of the National Theatre programme this year.

Certainly it is a well made play, from the point of view of economy of means and Bass's sure reward for the well-placed comic line but the somewhat pretentious claims that have been made for it on the basis that it represents a "significant" dramatic treatment of the "ethnic minorities problem" do not seem to me in any way justified. What the play does demonstrate is the way in which a writer whose plays have been taken up for commercial production is able to develop a consistent assurance and a positive social shared effect. He learns to pace his effects, and how to prepare an audience to receive those effects.

One fine example among many others in *Marfield Towers* of this kind of assurance is the writing in the way in which Ira prepares us, through dialogue between Anthony Marcell (to end his son Edward, for the time which provides the keynote for the confrontation between Anthony and Edward's estranged wife, mother, Marian Bruce, "Hello Marisa"), says Anthony, "I see you've shaved off your moustache". As delivered by Alan Cassell, this line brought down the house, and Barry has obviously calculated very precisely that it should have this effect.

The play is full of such felicitous of comic writing, poised one-hour usage out of seemingly obligatory dialogue. The form of the play facilitates the production of such devices since it explores many of the conventions of farce. Gathered together at Marfield Towers (Edward's holiday cottage at Patricina) through the device of a catastrophe about which it turns to spend the weekend are Edward and his

marrying spouse Marisa, their respective "lovers", Edward's sister Vivien, accompanied by Edward's old friend and rival "Ira" King, and finally Edward's Australian father and brother's mother.

Edward's difficulties in coping with his father's expectations, his strained wife, and his aging "Ira", whom he attempts to "protect" from the consequences of his liaison with the friend of his wider youth, "Dot", are all worked through an atmosphere of feigning gags and entrances (in the first act) reminiscent of Feydeau.

Anne Neeson demonstrated, with her fine 1970 production of *Caesar Lanius*, says No, that he has an affinity for the work of Alan Bass. The current production confirms this affinity. The show is nicely paced and Neeson has struck a fine balance between the frenetic comedy and the undertones of seriousness, which are largely present in Edward Marcell's collar of mortise set.

But, we are told, concerned of the character in question, whose comic laughter is a consequence of pain, and Steve Judd convincingly passed the torchon with his finely controlled performance. Judd, who was in his younger days a gifted but erratic performer, has matured well and has learned to judge to a nought the relation between the need of an audience and the timing of his performance. It is cast distinguished by energy and strength of performance he stood out. As the companion with whom Edward Marcell expects to spend a quiet weekend, Francesco Jones, Philippa Wilkinson exploited her considerable experience to advantage, eliciting a good many laughs from her presentation of Francesco's anxiety and pathetic desire to please, but also the audience's sympathy for her sense of inadequacy. An Edward's son, Ira, Bert Andrew King managed the difficult situation from entrenched threatening to the tentative reconciliation in his relationship with Edward with great skill and delicacy.

The undertones of the play in the discussion of race are perhaps most evident in the character of Louise Russell, "Radical rock radio DJ". Her measured and apertif exaggeration whilst approaching Francesco. Peter Bowles played Randal both broadly and with great energy, making a coarse success of a role which could easily have become simply an embarrassment to the play. His daughter Jodrell's control and Bowles' energy, perhaps the most satisfying performance of the evening came from newcomer Alan Piper, who handled the difficult role of Marisa Bruce, according to Hugo "the keynote of the play itself" with an assurance bellying her relative inexperience. Of the older players Alan Cassell, in the minor role of Anthony Marcell, was most notable despite the tendency for his accent to slide around between the concern of Middlebrow and public school Australian. Design, by Sue Russell, was refreshingly crisp, unity and efficiency.

Well produced and well-rehearsed, *Marfield Towers* is an unqualified success as a well-written entertainment.



Big Sydney Toys

SIX TOYS

DOROTHY HAWKES

Big Toys by Patrick White. Old Tote Theatre Company, Picnic Circuit, Rosemont NSW. Opened 17 July 1977. Director Jim Whelan. Assistant Mark Gandy. Designer Brian Doherty. Costumes John Vassallo. Lighting Jervis Lyle. Stage management, Jim Walker. Press, Penny Roberts.

Cast: Arthur Dignam QC, Max Cullen, Kate Fitzpatrick, Tony Legge, Max Collins.

Patrick White's first new play for fourteen years? What to expect? The rumours had been flying, but it had all been played pretty close to the chest — not imprecise, no, dazzling, yes, obscure, maybe, not like the other plays, definitely no.

So in the Parade with an inexpressible sense of occasion for *Big Toys*. "We I'm interested to see what you make of it. You've always been such a rated White fan."

The conservatism in the foyer later turned to bewilderment, the consternation on stage. What do they think about, the Old Tote patrons, seeing themselves with strange and sad as this? Hearing set? Do they feel it goes into their grain?

Arms from *The Marriage of Figaro*, anathema, pinching and snidely right. Kate Fitzpatrick lounging on a huge, contemporary circular bed, dressed in a white sheet robe, balancing a giant red balloon on the tip of one impeccably elegant anklekip, red shoes, coming into a red telephone. "I'm concerned about people darling."

We are in the world of expensive toys and this high life, the unattainable Mrs Beaumount, is the most elegant toy of them all.

In the gaudious bedroom above the great, glistening arc of the bathurst, and the black void of the wood of mastication, a bitter tea play out. Patrick White's chilly, domestic alegory.

Rather Beaumount, QC, Mac his wife and Tony Legge, the unwise leader, are all caught in this Point Paper malice, and only Terry leaves it and partially alive.

The theme might be, we are all finally corruptible but some are more corruptible than others. The boys are for coins and emeralds and whisky and Femina and pay-offs and harbour views, and coal

Left: Max Cullen and Arthur Dignam

working class town, and such bi-sexual lesbians, anti-warrior meetings, a brief history of the Labor Party, and Big Mag who don't feel a role from Tiberius to Point Piper.

"Big toys make everything right. Keep the children quiet." It is all very Sydney Mag is the centre-piece of the play — she is the Big Toy, the kept lady, the object of love and affection, she is the view of the Harbour and even Sydney itself, rich, stylish. "Style is everything", aubrey, beautiful, a whore of opportunity who wishes she was something else, and brings her past with her into the play. Della the hooker who eventually tries to rape her on the floor of the van, as she hollered from Tiberius, and makes it into the bourgeoisie — she wears clothes as well, the way as cool. "Oh, you Dostoevsky, I never seem to have time for reading." The past rules all their lives. Rachele, the poor, little, rich boy, who always wanted a big footballer man, and now wants Terry. Terry the lapdog-Catholic turned Communist, once more with the elaborately idealised figure of his dead wife Mary Island here, and Mag on the bed before him.

"You're corrupted now Mag."

Mag gives him a swirl of gold plumed with elephant's hair to wear round his neck, she makes him carry her parcels back home, she tells him she has "some unfinished care of good not quite smoothed by all the dying". She tells him about "the one you search for and never find", she tells him he will always remain "there no spot for her".

Using him for her husband's latest count, case she endures the pain of his caustic Rachele hatched over the harbour, and with self-blaming. "I was the shallow witness Rachele wanted, above suspicion". As the sun is a pool of chill white light on the bed behind him she is the symbol of that rich mixture of a city big toy spread about her. She cannot stand the black wind off that bathes across the glassed-in port.

"The black wind preyed and destroys me."

When it is all over, and Terry has given back the keys of the Ferrari, his pay-off for selling out on the armistice questions and trade union principles, the harpooning still takes place. He is a working class hero, he is "reduced to leave his character on the platform". The audience of Miss Callie's playing of Terry Lippa and shaper and unshaper. Terry is a weak man, and as incomprehensible as most of us. He has old fashioned views on most things, at most of the Australian Catholic working class of barge group here. Callie gets the moment's weakness and sadness of the character across, she has who can only relate to a wife dead of cancer, who wants the beautiful Mag, but can't get at her humanity, just only blame her for his downfall. Arthur (Dugdale), underpinning beautifully the silly corrupt Rachele Bouquet, is the perfect foil for Callie's angry ex-Catholic, with all his old rang-

ing half intact, and her new morality as shaky as his old.

Does Terry have a base? It's a question you can't really ask in the Sydney morality tale. They all lose and win, some more drastically than others. And when the game is over the participants remain as it always has. Mag has her Ferrari, the harbour is still mirrored outside.

Rachele, the boy wants, "Nothing's harmful if you analyse it", has not even taken the last road. As Mag lets in the blackness the flora, for a moment we all hear the wind off the harbour. "She's a street you creators under the canopy."

The ensemble playing of Arthur Dugdale, Kate Faganwick and Max Callie is a joy and a treat to watch, Jan Macrae's cool brilliant touch is over everything, the set design is the triumphal symbol of the play. "Today what is important is style". For once everybody from director to designer can appear know perfectly well what they are doing.

Australia's greatest realistic moral teller, in the bookshop and vestige, his doors again. Look you Sydneyites and repeat, ladies you Australians and others! That's your black wind blowing over Sydney harbour.

If this is entertainment let's have some more of it please

COMPOSITIONS

PETER KILIANA

Confessions by Alan Ayckbourn. Malthouse Street Theatre, Sydney. Opening 11 July 1977. Director Ted Crippe. Design, Helen Nieldson. With Lesley Paine, Kerry Walker, Barry Lewis, Phillip Hanson and Trevor Keast.

I arrived at the Malthouse Street Theatre in time to read my programme before the performance began and was rather startled to find dotted through it, what sounded curiously like a participation for the type of fare they have been presenting over the past few years.

For their tenth birthday (I read) "A musical was chosen as a statement of policy 'We aim to entertain'." There was a Cleo Rocosse quote: "There is a place in every large city for a hand-made theatre — to entertain people." And rightly hanging

over poor Alan Ayckbourn's photograph were the words "He has no message, no profound vision, gives no advice" — what can they mean by all that? Surely not that only people with absolutely nothing to say are entertainers? No, indeed, this is their belief that I must hasten to warn them (I'm sorry Alan) that there is a stake in their wellbeing! Mr Ayckbourn does have a message and it is exactly the same as the one expressed by Austin Cawdron, a loving concern with the frailties of human nature. The difference between them is a matter of weight, that's all.

The five short plays which make up *Confessions* are simply delightful. They are true stories in that they are connected in an arranged landscape and somebody's memory is at the centre of each one. In *Mother Figure* it is a woman so tormented by her children that she needs a couple of would-be-helpful neighbours as though they too were conditioined under test. In *Breaking Companions* it is a maid dressed by the anguish of loneliness to accuse a totally uninterested girl and sharing a barge with her. In *Between Mountains* the frenzy is spread over four diners in a restaurant who are keeping each other at lack of opinion while the ridiculous service of a maid arrives and departs. *Geofforth's Fiver* shows us a group of charity workers going ready for a fete while their expectations of each other are hilariously and sadly defined all around them. The evening ends with the low-key *A Talk in the Park* which because of its total simplicity is possibly the most moving piece of all. Five people sit on park benches each eager to communicate with the other but they are finally trapped into silence by suspicion.

The pieces are played by a strong company of actors: Lesley Paine, Phillip Hanson, Barry Lewis, Trevor Keast and Kerry Walker. However I feel that the director, Ted Crippe, doesn't quite measure up to the material. He turns *Geofforth's Fiver* into a vaudeville sketch, and in *Between Mountains* the complex rhythms of unscripted speech and noise carried on by the diners of coursepoint to the blithe naivety of their earnest are mishandled rather than evoked.

It's a pity with the actors too. Kerry Walker plays her matronly Mum as simply weary, she should be absolutely punch drunk. Phillip Hanson plays his desperate man in *Breaking Companions* for comedy, he should be despair for reality and allowing the vacuous need to carry the comedy. This sort of directional dither is needed throughout to ring up full value and a lot of often raising.

The settings by Helen Nieldson are suitable. It's a pity they have to be so arranged. Four seats space in order to clearly define movement. I started the evening with a large theatre party of people who obviously enjoyed every minute of it. Had a good time myself!

It also is what the Malthouse Street Theatre means by entertainment then, by all means, let's have some more of it please. No justification necessary.



The show *Side By Side By Sondheim* tributes him as the best lyricist, most adventurous composer and most considerable musical dramatist in the American theatre today.

ROBERT PAGE

Hello World~ this is Sondheim.

Few full scale revivals can now be mounted because of the enormous expense of putting large casts on stage and connoisseurs to back them. In recent years the man-musical has come into its own. Cole, Bernstein and the Fosters and all that jazz.

Take a bundle of songs, preferably well known, a small comic, and a handful of talented performers and with a musical anthology concert as a period feeling or just tribute to a name, Gilbert and Sullivan, a Cole Forum, or a Noel Coward. A recipe for success. Stephen Sondheim, after thinking, and at forty set with a lot of road still ahead of him, is being given this treatment.

The show *Side By Side By Sondheim* tributes him to the likes of George Gershwin, Irving Berlin and Richard Rogers as the best lyricist, most adventurous composer and most considerable musical dramatist in the American theatre today. "Though Sondheim's recent works have not met with unqualified success, and though few of his songs have deeply ended themselves on the popular consciousness, it is the dramatic backbone, the hard edge and lack of sentimentality in his comment on modern life, and the power, if too rich for the pop parade, of his music which makes this formula for remarkable success."

Sondheim goes beyond the pleasure and solace which has become the cliché of Broadway. Each song in this collage is a memento, playlet of the desperation underlying urban existence, much of Justice's stage of "disarray has many pains but comedy (which I take to mean backdoor) has few pleasures"; on the break up of relationships, social quirks and qualities, neighbours, children, even country — even the faded Hollywood myth dissolving so miserably in the American dream. As one critic put it: "The most dramatic songs are sung through gritted teeth". The world is that of the U.S.

metropolis but off road lead to New York in the suburbs.

In fact, the idea was conceived in England — perhaps a rock consider to recognise the work of an outsider — and then was taken with the original cast to Broadway where the critics fell over themselves in the scramble for tap-dances, admiring in passing that America had been beaten into new grooves. Since then a local company has been formed in New York with members Debbie and Toronto all playing to full houses and tremendous press response.

How right then, in this age of media to cast John Lowe in the part of the captain — the role created by another media man Ned Sherrin who also directed the original production. As another run for the own benefit and one more musical talents by linking the songs together notwithstanding on their origins, songs on Sondheim and off the cuff remarks which will be repeated at talk-back radio.

It's not really an acting part but one that requires the cool, sometimes and, whatever of the writer, whatever. His sardonic dealing with his sister audience and the instant recognisability of his diagnosis of their problems suggest well for the hard edge the show needs.

In interview though, the crusty Lowe, despite a fine role up his sleeve and countless TV appearances, seemed apprehensive of treadng the boards. With no memory of any stage acting and certainly none professionally he confided himself with the thought that "it will be alright as long as it's dark." Of course he has done a bit of television and radio and seems to have been fascinated by the notion of confronting an audience face to face. Wish title to do except assure that magnificent voice in a show that is enhanced the world over one can't help feeling that the tax has been paid before it's ever been taken. But that Lowe

is not a man to let go anything but certainties.

The most attractive thing for him besides the built-in entertainment value is the use of all American talent. Those actually performing the songs (Lowe has several gold records to his credit but won't be singing in that) are Bill Paterson, the well-known star of musical comedy here and no stranger to Sondheim having played in *A Little Night Music*, *Gaslight*, *Morrows* again with a strong musical show background and *Southbound*. John, Australian by adoption, TV actor and another performer from *Night Must*.

Even the production team boasts international talent, including Ray Cook currently doing a *Chorus Line* in London and the musical director of the original British production of *Side By Side*, and Helen Marriage, here born but co-producing from H.M. Tennent's (London) cellar with Australian Bill Crimshaw. With the show depending on mass appeal Einstein, having the location, despite the importance of the British in America, has a significance beyond that of recognition of the talents here.

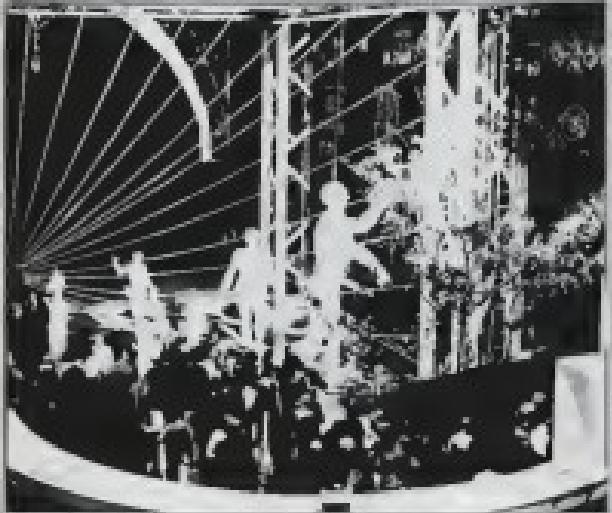
The set has to be minimal as a background for songs culled from musicals as diverse as *West Side Story*, *Gypsy*, *Company*, *Fiddler* and many others, but there will be nothing unusual about the costumes or the New York Times square type party to mark the Sydney opening at the Theatre Royal, 127 September after four nights at *Centres* beginning 21 September. The producers are taking a whale load of the MLC booking for what they expect to be the event of the season.

And after the last week run what does for John Lowe? Is this a new direction? Even before reading it, the stage seems to have evaluated him: "I would like to do straight acting parts... but only by invitation."

International

The *Berlin Theatertreffen* which takes place in West Berlin in May each year is an annual round-up of the ten most striking productions of the preceding season in the German-speaking theatre. In practice the German Democratic Republic ignores the event, so the choice is restricted to the Federal Republic (where there are 2000 new productions annually), Austria and Switzerland. The Austrians, with their conservative temperament and preference for solid actors' theatre rarely get into the final selection, for this is a directors' festival, and the jury of critics looks for ingenious and inventive productions. The Austrian for 'ingenious and inventive' is 'outrageous', which partly explains why all the productions on show this year came from the Federal Republic. Basel and Zurich occasionally represent Switzerland, but neither had anything to show on this occasion.

Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure*



Germany

This year's

Berlin Theatertreffen

Hugh Morrison

The chosen productions were Carlo Goldoni's *Servant of Two Masters* (dir. Nedra Peter Radolfi) and Goethe's *Faust I* and *II* (dir. Claus Peymann) from the Wittenberghausen *Stadttheater*, Stuttgart; Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* (dir. Peter Stein) a company project from the Schaubühne am Halleschen Ufer, Berlin, directed by Agnes Baltsa; a group project, and Disney's *Heidi Gabler* (dir. Peter Zadek) from Bremen; Shakespeare's *Othello* (dir. P. Zadek) and Kurt Valentin's *Zwergenverzerrungen* (Hans Neuenfels, dir. Ulrich Hengst) from the Deutsches Schauspielhaus, Hamburg; Heide Gabler (dir. M. P. Radolfi) from the Schillertheater, Berlin; Egonreder's *Antony* (dir. Hans Neuenfels) from Frankfurt; Shakespeare's *Measure for Measure* (dir. Dieter Dorn) from the Munich Kammerspiele. A parade of established names, since Neuenfels, Peymann, Radolfi, Stein and Zadek have among them had nearly four productions in the Theatertreffen in the last five years. Neuenfels, an interesting and varied crew.

The two *Hamlet* productions mark a closer look. The whole tradition of middle-class drama from Lessing to Hauptmann has come under close scrutiny in Germany in the last decade, not least Hamlet, which the Germans have made as much their own as Shakespeare. This has all happened under the general heading "revivalism of our bourgeois heritage", as continental theatre around the rest of modern advanced society. One of the subtler ramifications of a nineteenth century script was Peter Stein's witty production of *Peter Grün* at the Schauspielhaus am Halleschen Ufer in 1971. In considering the visual framework for the play and the period attitudes embodied in the characters the production team used

It will not be enough to know the movement history on the basis of the facts that you need for a Marxist analysis. Estimates of the whole broad nature of the economic, military, or social developments that it produced, will be more instructive for our ideas of things we would call 'today'. The understanding of institutions that in practice can be traced back to the bourgeois period with the rapid advance of science and technology, the encroaching of urban urban and rural culture; the advances of plutocracy in Central Europe; not to mention the colonies.

The popular aspect of capitalism, imperialism, improved communications, the opening up of Africa and America with its armed and used as the background for the quixotic figure of Peter Grün, who was played by six different actors at different stages of his development. He was seen as

a "pink bourgeois Faust engaged on a quest for identity" — among the behaviour of a successful captain, and repeatedly failing at the attempt." In the original text as Peer had to face the fact that his, and the class whose aspirations he embodied, were destined to be swept away. His re-education by Solingen's love because intense.

Since then there has been probing from various angles. Hans Neubauer directed a remarkable *Doll's House* in Frankfurt in 1972 in a set inspired by Magritte, using magrittean images in the way that poster juxtaposes incongruous objects irresistibly in space. Melancholy transposed from personal affluence to metropolitan grand



Schillertheater Hedda Gabler

Something upstage, copies in and power lies bowled but definitely on the top of the Christmas tree — that kind of thing. A Doll's House was revised several times in an spin-off of Women's Life East (West) Germany's astounding conservative director, Rudolf Noack, successfully directed it in Berlin at the Renaissance theater as pointed reproduction, close to the original. This is the context of the two *Hedda Gablers*.

Rudolph's Schillertheater production is highly stylized. Roger von Mildenberg's set is a vast, airy, two-level room. Intel with peering roundaboutings, like a study Edwardian schoolroom. In a set situated below the skylight window, patient flocks and two dead pigeons. A live pigeon comes and flutters until it is framed small at the bottom centerline in the fourth act. A vista left looks out over sand to the sea, at the back, doors open on to an elegant black and white art nouveau dining room, a glimpse of the world that great Hedda has only Gilda's house. Hedda is a wild, erratic, immature creature, picking her way moodily around the prosenium. Her clothing is a strange, short, sprightly costume and elegant, black brocade cocktail dress. Her appearance of sophistication and fragility contrasts with the immaturity of the other characters, where Rudolph has tried to see through her eyes. Ruth, the maid who has been succeeded to Hedda from the man she has married Thomas, becomes a padded, waddling creature with a huge buckled belt. Thomas, Brack and Lovborg are three thick-set, tweedy redoubts, shown back and sides, brutal bourgeois who could have stepped off the pages of George Grosz's drawings. The grotesque, garishness visual style is consistently worked out in the action, in

that the doors and screens below the surface of Hedda's isolated apartment. Brann's mechanics are exposed to view. A few as simple the room has been decked with flowers sent by friends to welcome them back from their honeymoon. In a final gesture, Hedda throws three (or four) hysterical offerings out the window. Thomas tries to restrain. The beginning of act three finds Hedda crouched in front of an electric fire on top of a cupboard. Thomas, returning from Brack's stag-party thinks the stage is empty, is startled when she speaks, then calmly climbs up beside her for the rest of the scene. When Brack leaves in act three after having gleefully asserted that Lovborg is destroyed and the Brack-Hedda-Torvald triangle is safe again, Hedda slowly and poetically tips up the chair he has been sitting on off the stage. As Thomas and Mrs Lovborg become engrossed in the possibility of succumbing, Lovborg's manservant, Hebbel, clad only in a transparent negligee which nobody has noticed so little are they aware of his real presence, struts across the floor with a cigar wedged like a moustache between lip and nose in a futile effort to attract attention to himself. Thomas does not immediately realize it is the usual indulgence he would give to a child. Patterns of behaviour are obvious and explicit, from Hedda's fine entrance, silently chewing gum to her final scene, when Thomas and Mrs Lovborg are crowded all over Lovborg's sofa. Brack puts his feet up, and addresses himself to pipe and cigar. A shot offstage, blood splashed on the glass door, and Hedda suddenly falls through with a nail hole in her forehead. There is a fascination in watching this mad evolvement, none of the realization that a straight reading of Alfredo Gabler can produce, but a kind of bewitched wonderment that the adaptors can manage so appropriately into these grotesque images and an idiomization of the German actors' ability to strike a consistent level of style. Expressionism is still alive and living strongest in the Federal Republic.

Zadok in Bochum approached *Hedda Gabler* from another angle, allowing the actors to be themselves. An older characterisation is discontinued, author house by the casting. Freedom for the actor to find possibilities within himself, without the imposition of a prescribed role, is characteristic of Zadok's current technique. In his *Otello*, which I watched many last article (TA March/April 1977),



Schillertheater Hedda Gabler

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Medea

he also allowed the actors to establish a base position for their parts and then left in the spaces between one another, so to speak. In the case of Hedda the dominant note was muted, understated, stately, a relatively English style for the German stage. Ruedi Zschäck played Hedda as a cool, poised lady of the house in Dorothea New's book of the troupe with a discreet, single string of pearls. We sit back at the beginning of the *Wienertagsspielzeit*, when bourgeois self-respect was just beginning to depend on conspicuous consumption. The Hedda has only her father's pearls to play with, she observes at the end of act one, because Torvald can afford neither the chauffeur nor the horse that the Berliner visitors require. Silence is perhaps the claim to the protagonist. If the Berlin Hedda was mad, a madman among pretenders, the Bochum version is a more stoic figure, based by the influence of middle class affluence. She sits on a sofa well up to flirt with Lovborg when Ulrich Wohlgenutten, her fiancé, played as a kind of hoodlum Dylan Thomas. Her husband Torvald was a limp figure, out of his depth with her, a secondary Oxford don, our right wing, in baggy pajamas and baggy slippers. Judge Brack, a dapper Brylcreamed teacher on the look-out for a bit on the side. The act brought out the disparity between the rank of Hedda's situation and her aspirations, standard fitness furniture, a red sofa, playing Eichendorff-Rosa Luxemburg's rhythmic and a velvet sofa with scatter cushions, but set in a soberious, monochromatic red room with two massive marble pillars reaching up to the floor, looking like an unromantic corner of the National Gallery. An unbroken act as the dialogue established that it had been built for a farce. Some Puccini. Zadok's interpretation of the text worked well one long stretch, carried by Ruedi Zschäck's poised Hedda, with her sex appeal just below the surface, but it failed to make her sexually plausible. Dorothea and a husband with a big nose would have seemed the most ordinary wife.

It was a good year for plays dominated by women. Lessing's *Medea* von Bochum

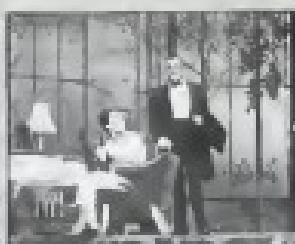
the performance arrived on the scene at about 10.45. Frederick the Great's famous commandment by the Berlin public, largely consisting of German tourists, was to play it over and have been done in English, though it is a vision of Germany. On this occasion it might go down well in translation, or the lead of producer William Gaskill gave Farquhar's *Roxbury Intrigue* one of the best acts.



Buchum *Hedda Gabler*

Hanspeter Meissner too had a strong female lead. This was a group production, masterminded by Hans Neubauer, which attempted to interpret *Hedda Gabler*, played by Elisabeth Trusser, as a vision of sexism and enclosed contemporary references where possible. *Hedda* becomes a vanishingly, usually symbolised by a pair of tatty white Oxford bags, where which becomes a casket. *Hedda*'s children have disappeared as a result of parental neglect and are actually fifteen year olds. All of *Hedda*'s dealings with men are coloured by their sexist attitudes, so that the amorous long of Alving, for example, is only prepared to offer her a virgin whom she manages to have a foetus extracted from her. The general drift of the production, addressing the social subjugation of women, which Neubauer creates, is plain for all to read in the original text, was clear enough, but the incidental elements had run riot from the classical measures who only had to respect the diction of Krohn and Arvidson while on ensuring a measure phallos and went through all manner of crass constructions on to some two interludes. Over the top as a production, but it has apparently attained a big audience and stimulated lively discussions on women's rights in Frankfurt.

On the two-group project as show, Buchum's *Medea* was an improvement



Buchum *Hedda Gabler*

based on the last's experiences and mistakes, which helped pull it back to death plot — vaguely. Threaded all through from down on the British fringe for some time, but is now well as a blithering, bawling addition to the scattered set up in Germany. The Schaubuech's *Makrokosmos*, which I looked up in my last article is an attempt to reconstruct the formality of Shakespeare's round in a kind of amateur-wam performance. Letters on the chronologies of Poetry, Copepeiros and Tyche Brate with huge tool-kits of their respective moral systems. Readings from Burton's *Treatise of Melancholy*, in a reconstruction of Leonardo da Vinci's Library of 1532. Demagogicities of rhetorical gestures as coding on John Donne's manual of looks. And of course various acrobats, sketches, lots of juggling, acrobatics. The elaborate exercise in theatre history was presented on the foreground principle with various scenes going on simultaneously for you to digest at will. The whole thing splendidly produced in a way that only the most fervently interested theatregoer could afford. The event was a warm-up for a forthcoming production of *Twelfth Night* which will re-unite some of the castants, and of course the set. Kurt Braun Murrmann had built a wooden scaffolding, which carried the lighting grid and enabled painted skins to be dropped round the audience, as well as floating platforms for elevated acrobatics. If *Twelfth Night* brings Peter Stein the acclaim all his other major productions have all will have been justified.

The Hamburg production of *Wahlvergnügen*, based on sketches by Karl Valenca (1882-1941) is of more personal interest. Valenca was a Munich dialect comedian who was constantly struggling in his own vocabulary and with the macabre objects around him. One of his sketches shows a proud father taking his newly born son for a walk. Spaghetti? "Brotz"! Bread was a farce, and Michael Cavanagh has aptly compared him to Will Rodgers, though Valenca was always a double act with Leopold Kullrich. As is emerging in that straight action can now take up the comic aspect, and experimenting with it in dialect other than German.

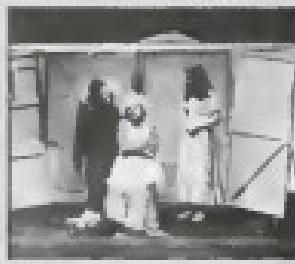
Stuttgart again had two productions in both confirming no status as one of the liveliest cities on the German scene. Nedda Peter Rudolph directed Goldoni's *Servant*

or *Two Minutes*, which for the last thirty years has been one in terms of George Sarton's *Amleto*, followed Piccolo Teatro production with Marcelllo Mastroianni's *Truffaldino* as *Melan* in 1987. Rudolph responded that Commedia dell'arte comes into the liveliest world of German comedy, where it worked well. There is evidence here that Zadek's experiments with improvised acts using objects found in the prop store or working on the way through the system. Hans Freyer's *One* was a bare stage with a motley array of old chairs on one side, a couple of deckchairs on the other and a stained buckethole. His costumes had worn a ragtag, ranging from the crumpled drappery man and muddly dress for *Truffaldino* to eighteenth century coat and wig for *Pantalone*. The characters were turned into Totenkopf types. Salvo, the sailor, becoming an inflated Corps member with his sailor dungarees, his legs and topplings like his efforts to poker. The evening was capped by Peter Bergmann's *Shylock* *Antipolo* of a *Truffaldino*.



Faust

And finally Faust I and II over two evenings. The director, Claus Peymann, and the designer, Achim Freyer, took equal credit for this production, which explores the potential of Goethe's writing in search for visual spectacle. Freyer's stage environments and his male costumers are much a visual themselves, and begin disappearing. Take the Prologue in Heaven, which is about out. Peymann, Freyer put a Santa Claus God high in a box above the stage flanked by angels in pink helmets generated from the Indian Army's and long gowns with stiff gold armlets which serve as marching gear with which they playfully move down crooked at God's orders for beauty. Much of the text is recited in playway, indeed the production brings out a sense of comedy that nobody had noticed in *Faust* before. The certain problems with the Goethean tragedy roughly the second half of *Faust I*, which is played without verbal support against some glorified erotic. Marcus Lutze in *Faust* and Thessa Aufseher as Gretchen don't quite pull it off after the preceding spectacle. The Stuttgart style of production is open to criticism for its cavalier handling of the text, but Peymann/Freyer have compensated with *Faust*, and with *Das Kästchen von Melibokus* last year, on continuing uneven terms, and the girls have been considerably



Faust

Festival of Fools in Amsterdam

2-20 June 1977

"The reason there are so many groups from England," says a member of the London-based troupe Akakadabra, "is that there are so many fools there."

The Festival of Fools in Amsterdam does not only boast the best in the English vaudeville tradition, but also a wide assortment of names such as plays, pantomime, sketches and improvised comedy reviews, from as far away as Argentina and Los Angeles.

It is rightly called a celebration, and the motto is very much one of Laughter, finding a common ground, and of openness in every possible form of theatre communication.

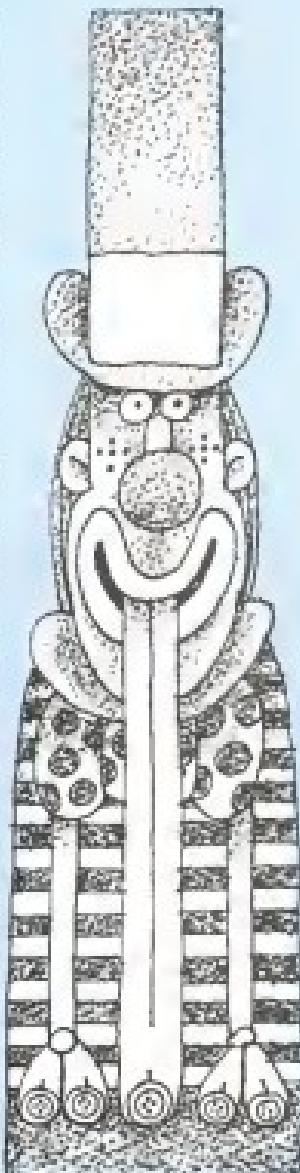
This is the third year of the festival, which was initiated by American tramps, actress Linda Edwards of Friends Reunited, who answers the question Why a Festival of Fools?

"Simply for the reason that the fool is one of the most meaningful characters in theatre history. The fool is the individual who has the ability to communicate to the public information about their past, their present, and also shed light on a future. The fool is a commentator, a mirror of his surroundings."

Just this year last year over 20 groups presenting around 200 performances in the course of three weeks in three theatres as well as the Vondelpark open air theatre and the many street-filled old market places of Amsterdam.

In response to the cynicism often felt in Europe's established and highly refined theatre world, there was a refreshing openness and will to experiment in the festival — always a inspiring stimulus of new possibilities, not generalization.

The Melkweg, a renovated hardware building just a stone's throw across a canal from a police station, is a youth centre with two dance rooms, restaurant and disco-rooms, it is government-subsidized by more than \$100,000 a year. It was packed every night and by mid-night the fools would lay so heavy over the floorboards that all one needed was to sit back. Holland's drug laws have been liberalised recently so distinguishing between hard and soft drugs and therefore selling and possessing up to 50 grams for personal use. (After a ten minute walk along the canals, and one could choose instead the Smily-wheel, open to a other conventional theatre period as well, and where there was more bar areas indeed). At other places with a membership card costing a mere two dollars, one could buy a ticket for the entire evening for another two, and more from room to room to see lots of the many offerings, including Frans Zwangers' experimental plays. Most shows cost on different rates at the various repeat and



this could reach a wide audience. And shows were on schedule or twice the same night.

The new year is already during the Festival of Fools when the group partners for an evening concern who would perhaps had the Melkweg seen fit sufficient to bring The Dan Newyorkers, Spies and even the Amsterdam Historical Museum provided safe storage points for the sounds of everything from the Women's Liberation group Sisterhood from New York with their tough and deliberately unpolished "Women vs Violence" show to the pugnacious clowns of the Great Salt Lake Mime Troupe or the new six pack rock stars of the Amsterdam-based Fratello Rossetti.

With no clear emphasis on relevance to the present, art communication not based entirely on words and meanings of form, the Festival of Fools may well become one of the most exciting international alternative theatre forums around. Working as it is on a shrinking budget, which means a limitation of programming, there is a danger of maybe too much of an overload that a visitor afford to pay travel expenses for groups from far away, only less and local expenses. Yet, as several performers told me, many groups are now playing their own money around the world in order to be there because they feel it such a valuable experience in terms of inspiration and exchange of ideas.

Recruitment to it has been mainly from England (Artspace, Shakes, Footloose Theatre, Action Space, No No, Theatre Stompers etc), Holland (Papier Drol, Bommers, the international theatre group Dagobert, etc) and neighboring countries like France with a striking similarity in styles of course the vaudeville style or the French-style comic. Among the more interesting shows I saw were two from Argentina Le Grand Recruit, with their marching Captain inspired music show of the same name, and the witty, mind-bending act of Carlos Trujillo with his one-man show. Another high point was the Los Angeles Misch Theatre which explores the potential of masks in realising contemporary L.A. stories with its graphic hand-drawn.

The festival could do with more reflect from different parts of the world and the Australia Council could do worse than to provide a travel grant for a group that would like to travel and perform next year. This year there was even an alternative festival with mostly clowns, as everything from fire-eating to a pugilistic and torch acrobatics. A few more fools might do Australian theatre a lot of good.

AO Sydney season's first month immeasurably better in the event than one might have predicted

The first month of this year's major Sydney season of the Australian Opera turned out immeasurably better in the event than one might have predicted it would.

Laricina Draga, which I reviewed last month, turned out to be not only an excellent vehicle for John Studdert but a fine ensemble effort for the company, and the other early season new production, Aubrey's *Fro Donzello*, was a good deal more satisfying in the event than I had feared. It might be my first appearance with the Shirley story line and its largely postmodern score. Nor were any of the three revivals of the pastel without interest — *The Barber of Seville* and *The Tales of Hoffmann* for the personnel changes we were treated to this time round, *La Bohème* for the spectacular improvement in Ruggiero/Torreggiani's performance of the title role as much as for the welcome return of Donald Smith to the roster of the AO after almost a year of inactivity.

It took some performances for *Fro Donzello* to be top form, but right from the start it was well worth seeing and hearing

for John Copley's unapologetically banterous production, the aggressively artful set of Harris Sherman and costumes of Michael Sisonian, the vocal star turn of Isabella Bechtold and the impeccably correct and precise conducting style of Richard Bonynge.

Robert Gurd's *Donzello* was an acting triumph from the word go, but it was not until several performances into the season that he was fully in ease vocally. Much the same could be said of Heather Higgins' Lady Alceste, and even Dennis Glass was not always absolutely at character in *Lord Alchibi* on opening night. But the music of *Alois Hánsel* proves so refreshingly deadlocked as to be entirely in the category of unusually forgettable fairy floss: no one would claim it ranks consistently with the greats, but it leaves a good low ranking when it is performed with the consistent sense of style a director can instill in an ensemble. It is Draga's music which either bores and exhilarates with a champagne effervescence or falls flat on its face. Likewise, the dramatic side of pieces like *Fro Donzello* date with that Draga's conser-

va-check lightness of touch that Copley manages consistently in this *Donzello*, the piece seems to have a good deal more merit than any dispassionate analysis of its ingredients could reveal.

It is the little things, both musical and dramatic, that make this *Donzello* such a joy — the tiny wisps of orchestral sound that are handled with such precision; the subtleties of room reflection, apogee or sang; the subtle drift of the piano phrasing, costumes and prints; the little bits of stage business that not only amuse first time round but keep you discovering things you missed if you go back and see the piece again.

Copley himself says he worked particularly hard on the details of the production and it generally shows. In *Fro Donzello* as in *successus* as — dare I name the comparison? — his *Arleander* on Nuremberg in 1973 was not. For Copley's conception here demonstrates the idea plus, antithesis the often trite maxims, whereas much of his invention in *Arleander* seemed oddly self-indulgent — even at odds of form, with the sense and grace of the piece.



Donzello

With *Aida* Bassols there are no such reservations. Coplay knows what he is about just about every inch of the way and gets us with the pin of interesting and amusing his audience in a highly sophisticated manner. He vocalizes in a vein of *jeu* that is literally more than the eye can take in fully as one expects hence the unquenched joy to be derived from going back to see his *Divas* more than once.

Take, for instance, the marvellously apt and inventive stage business between Buchanan's sentimental aria at the start of Act II, or Bassols's aria at the start of Act III. Coplay is hard at work throughout both these areas, just as he is in the memorable trio in Act I, where Bassols is making much self-reproachful love to Lucy Allens under Lord Almaviva's very nose, whereas a Coplay could not have believed what he did unless he had been blessed with as vocally and dramatically talented a team as Gori, Biggs and Quigley.

Quigley is not an obviously successful hero as he has been in some of his O and S performances with the ADs, but it is nice to see him venture outside the particularly castigated, stylized corner of the repertory represented by the little man who sings his pretty songs like Divas do theirs — some would say overbearing — in his limited vocal resources, but proved himself, increasingly as the production was run in full, a real-life star in an important part which lacks the vocal display of Buchanan's, the flair and swagger of Gori's, or the comic potential of Biggs's (very gently cast) of her relations with the devilish-duplicitous *toys* — Olympia and the humor implicit in the inevitable plight of the over-dressed English lady at sister-in-law's Italy).

An even more difficult role to bring off is that of the bumbling young serpent, Lorraine, a two-dimensional minor blackhead in the best tradition of comic opera normative before, Anton Aspin's very poor will and turned in a workmanlike acting performance with the odd trace of comic flair.

In lesser roles, Neil Warren-Smith was a superbly shifty Falstaff (big, Clemons' Ever an adequate co-thug without squabbling with anything like the same brilliance. And Donald Banks made short as much of the rinkeeper, Zerlina's father, as there is to be made of him.

In late June, Marilyn Richardson became the third soprano to tackle the gaudily burlesque in the AD's *Tales of Hoffmann* (following in the classless footsteps of Jean Sutherland in 1974 and Joan Currie in 1973). The rest of the major parts were played by the same singers who created the roles with director Raymond Myers as the villain, Henry Wilson as Hoffmann, Clemons Ever as the grotesquely comic servants.

Predictably, the old hands were even more assured than this new round, equally predictably, Richardson was most spectacularly effective as Antons, the Act III baron whose equal style sets her ideally. Her Olympia was surprisingly successful in

copaging with the coloratura demands of the role, less credible (surprisingly) when it came to getting across the feeling that she is a mechanical doll who can give the illusion of life only as long as she is wound up like a clock, every few hundred bars. Giulietta, the Vienna contessa of Act II, demands more subterranean vocal depth than Buchanan can provide, but she is physically more than voluptuous enough so as red-blooded male in the audience would have written much about that. Overall, it was a performance more than able to hold its own against the two Divas who were before.

This year's *Carmen* was infinitely better than last year's amateurish stagy of Tom Langdon's production, the result being Huguenot Teatengana's spectacular improvement in the title role rather than the presence of a new Don José (Donald Sennett) or the improved conducting of Russell Charnell. Charnell's reading of the score, particularly in the matter of tempos, is a good deal more judicious — and satisfying — than Burkhard Moeggen's (Sennett is gone too fast, as in the *acte* final, but he rightly takes the smugglers' quibbles like the wind and now he allows the score adequate time to breathe at most other points, whereas last summer he did not).

Despite his admitted shortcomings as the acting front it would take a very drama-oriented open-mind to object to the presence of Smith in an open air. His *acte* final on the bank of grassiness, an almost continuously shrillling sound that has been one of the AD's greatest assets over the years. And it has certainly been kept in good form during its past 10 months. It is a reminder of unqualified rejoicing that he and the AD have turned the *bistro* at least far enough so he will be making great appearances with the national company this year and next, even if not appearing as full-time stars.

It must be said that the Don José was a considerable comedown from Ross Stevens' original. If my copious serving under me had been as modest as it was to Langdon's (though at this Act I, I would have had less court-maestro'd forthwith, and at no stage did he convince me he was really previous enough with his Carmen to be capable first of *dolorosa*, then of *murder*, to avoid losing her. He was not nearly different enough toward her at the start, nor was he obsessed enough with her at the end; the biggest trouble with his realization of the role was that his Don José was static, whereas the dramatic core of the opera is that Don José is a conformist and eventually disrupted by his relationship with Carmen. It is Carmen who dies rather than changes his lifestyle.

It was said that Smith made his rapaciousness with the AD in terms of a performance which was no dramatically wrong, for he has proved in the past that he is capable of a good deal better. And Teatengana was then deprived of a suitable fit for his own Carmen Mark Two, which is unreasonably better than her Carmen Mark One. Last year indeed,

she gave the impression she was almost fighting against the role, trying perhaps to play down the beauty of the character, deprive Carmen of her largeness and make her ever more ferocious, unattractive than she ought by rights to be.

Teatengana's 1971 Carmen is vastly different, she is a vocal joy to watch. Don Smith and a dramatic joy to watch Ross Stevens. I look forward to experiencing the pleasure of the distance fireworks, that ought to result from a collision of Stevens and the new Teatengana in this forthcoming opera.

The welcome re-opening of the Sydney Conservatorium in the open field can only be in line with a production of Smetana's *Bohemian Girl* as the reduced fly installation of a new pipe organ stage of the Carlo matto had. In view of the severe physical constraints, Michael O'Kearney set for the piece were adequate, providing as they did, a twinned performance area which was at once spacious, if not perhaps ideal, both for the village scenes which is the venue for Act I and III, and the pierce which is the setting for Act II.

Somewhat, Francis Curzon's direction made quite a good job at keeping things moving even within the relatively cramped stage areas available, though Eric Chapman's conducting tended at times to be a good deal more formal than was appropriate to the sort of necessary because of the rustic nature of the orchestral forces involved.

Another set of central figures (these two roles alone were double cast in the production) was ideal, but all four singers had a good deal of merit. As Mirella, Amanda Thorne had a solid edge of Jennifer Lindfield, while Lindfield had the edge in the dramatic department. As Jenks, her lover, John Mana was a good deal more readily pleasing than Geoffrey Morris, but Morris had a slight edge dramatically and seemed to show flashes of vocal beauty that took well for his voice. In the major supporting roles, Geoffrey Cook was a sagely overgrown marriage broker (as both cases), and Jonathan Hughes made a very good job indeed of the difficult slithering village idiot, Vrak.

And there were some remarkable moments of ensemble good when the arrow came to town, with its commanding (played by Gary Harrel) and its decisions during *Borsone's* (played by Claren Ford). Some inventive stage business here, particularly involving the proletarian strong man and his impish offspring, was great fun for the kids, and the folk dancing of the Contemporary Dance Association's choreographed scene was quite good given the constraints of the site.

Finally, this was quite a good *Banished Bride*, marred primarily by failure to play down sufficiently the glaring dramatic inadequacies of the open field, but perhaps, to be fair, that is impossible. And there is sufficient musical merit in the piece to warrant the occasional airing despite its dramatic problems.

Dance Company (NSW)

Tip and Two Numbers are a couple of the most innovative and disturbing works yet seen in this country

Can the dancer have a political mind?

Can it align itself with an ideology, to present the ideals and outcomes of a group in a convincing and effective manner?

Most people would shake their heads vehemently and point to *Fokine's Petrushka* as probably the only great work that has even the smallest political statement included.

In any case, they would go on, it has been political only by hindsight. The dancing crowd in the halls that crystallised the theoretical concepts of Pinauer and Meyerhold, because for later generations a symbol of the class struggle in *Ussuri Ryebs* that exploded a few years after the 1911 premiere of the ballet.

Fokine himself apparently had no political motive in mind during the work's creation and many other "virgin Dancers", a man who loved the old Russia would not necessarily have allowed such a radical colour to creep into any of his performances.

What Petrushka had going for it was its burlesqueish situation. The right of the small person to live his own life, away from the conventions and control. Any criticism of the later Edwardian society was purely incidental.

The political theme, squalid theatre, death in specifics. Certain repetitions at certain times, delineated social boundaries. He had been able to point up those repetitions and hopefully to get them changed. On that count, the political theme is a very rare bird in western society. It has emerged periodically, nothing. It has passed up problems presented them with force but, generally speaking, a provocative speaker on a soapbox has done more politically than any amount of staged "drama". All of these questions came to mind usually while watching, the *Dance Company* people in their presentation of Ian Spurk's *Two Numbers*.

Spurk has taken the conscience of the world premiere of one of the greatest, most artful and strangely witty buffets of the classical repertoire, Coppelia, and the (and)ality of the Paris Comique and wangled a ballet/theatre piece that is rich, moving and at some ways anxiety-inviting in the way it uses points and associated ones.

Some of the points it refers are cogent, while a few of the sections it asks are

perfunctory or not aimed sufficiently towards a purpose to make out that of an answer. It is a rag bag, but an affective, reflecting, stimulating rag bag.

It presents the events of the Paris Commune showing the involvement of the mob at the barricades and it shows the high place of "fun" and "failure" and "Theatrical Reality" in a way that is true to tag, and quite serious.

It succeeded me in moments of Counter-Chore, play, *The Puritan Rehearsal*, *The Utopians*.

It highlights the comparison between a theatrical situation of events or situations and the situations and events in the real, dangerous and palpable outside world.

Two Numbers tells us that "theory" is a matter how much it may try to modify the situation, even "define" the real world.

In one scene we get the performers (that's the only way of describing it) of *Franz Xaver's* little doll Sewahills from the clutches of the manipulative Dr Coppelia and follow the with the dogged determination of the grey people of the Paris streets to build their barricades and throw themselves together for mutual protection.

Later on there is a hilarious pantomime for Gary Hill as Francois and Graeme Murphy as Mr Thibet (the French Head of State) with them swinging alive themselves at each other and each pointing reflexively for distance from the other, while at the background the other dancers are desperately dashing off and on stage flinging down used bags and running for their lives. It is both sick and savage.

And then, at the end of the work, the last few surviving members of the Paris communitarian get up and dance to the marchin from Coppelia. The music missing here and there here here and there so if it had been shot in the sheet music. It is the last hard slog in a very angry piece of literature. After all, when the Committee had been disbanded and the art was free for Coppelia to go on at the Opera again, it was terribly underfunded. Because so many of the dancers' techniques and efforts had either been lost or forgotten for entering into the real world and taking their stand.

I hope from this rather bald description that one has an idea of the number of fascinating illusions and aspects that this truly interested and eclectic work imparts

to the viewer.

The trouble is that one leaves the theatre aftering the concept more than appreciating the actual execution, and here I'm talking in strictly choreographic terms. I'm not politically alone in this view either. The Dance Company itself had the inspired idea of creating questionnaires amongst the audience at the conclusion of the programme and many of them said that people were excited, but confused with *Two Numbers*.

But it did inspire heated argument and discussion and surely any work that has "political" aspirations must count itself a partial success in its intent, if it sends people darkly questioning certain things.

But, as choreographic terms, strong aspects of the piece worked against the over-all impact.

It was difficult to adjust one's sight to the abrupt change between the initial scenes from Coppelia, all very huffy and vacuousness in total contrast right to the shuffling, jumbled sometimes static groupings that followed.

As the piece progressed the disengagement seemed out and one could follow the two strands and the way they interacted.

But it needs pricing. *Two Numbers* is too diffuse and self-absorbed at the moment. Intentions and attitudes are not pre-posted or defined clearly enough. It seemed to me too that the dances were enthusiastic about the idea but were just as confused as the audience about the "motivation" or the meaning behind the ballet's scenes and events.

For those who like to have the information clearly presented to them (e.g. theatre lovers or film buffs) before they make up their mind, readers direct to an earlier appreciation.

In trying to describe in plain English words Graeme Murphy's *Top*, I am presented with one of the most appealing works I have ever seen.

The only note in the programme for *Top* is a mass of the dictionary definitions of the word itself. "A small painted extremity of anything; a pointy bit, a suggestion, to give a picture to, an item of information". All these and more are available for the choreographer and the audience to puzzle with.

One definition of the word serves well as a starting point. A top being a damping ground in a rifle butt top.

When the curtain rises, one is confronted with an obscure setting, a tall racial structure covered and based in one set, and sets, paper structures at the other end of the huge a water trough. The sound is inhibited by dense polyphony



draped in rags. The images of the underworld, the sweat of the central campfire through sand and mud. The bullet's going to be about the sweat, the sweat and the mysterious you think. Well in some ways it is.

The tall structure is inverted, it looks like something out of a geometrical theorem. The structure is inhabited by two scantly clothed men.

As the percussive plants and plants (erry, I'm in the waste country of the live orchestra give way to a rather) Le Sacre du Printemps' marching electrons split the two men battle for supremacy (thus the Mandragore Fugitive underground!)

The mutants stamp as and off somewhat like those creatures in a B grade horror movie. Suddenly a woman steps out of the rough at the back of the stage, soaking wet. The two men dance for her and with her, trying for her attention then suddenly in giddiness on the metal stage.

Meanwhile the mutants dash about in a strange approximation of a giddy walk. One of the men gets into the rough and then dances around, working wet.

Towards the end the two men pro-lapman get together and the mutants put down the paper structures and frantically wrap the trousers up in them as if packing rubbish. The end.

There. Try make of that what you can!

I read, three times I read!

Take the best of modern dance, it is totally subversive, unpredictable, change with each viewing.

The whole work is concerned with different aspects of creating layers of interpretation. As one migrates from section to programme, "aged" and "contaminated" environmental changes — the result, predictably, inexorably.

This is the core perhaps to why it can pass into a mutant, in its own inimitable language, the quality of personal experience in this quickly changing society.

All those definitions are tested, and tested again by Murphy's choreography. The dancers themselves progress through the work with an intense understanding of the work's argument, however personal and divergent their collective belief systems may be.

All I can say now is that I hope the company perform it again, if possible in other states and I hope a lot of people get to see it.

Ty and The Newtines are a couple of the most innovative and striking works you see in this country and Ty in particular would not disgrace the repertory of the National Dance Theatre or one of the more typical American dance companies.

Both works please an Australian audience heading into the maelstrom of contemporary dance. Both works are making up for lost time and the fact that Australia has never seen the subtleties of the term "modern dance" or any of their works, with the exception of small segments of Tetley and Merce Cunningham. Perhaps that is a blessing in disguise because that leaves the way clear for Australian choreographers to have their say in the way they want to speak without having to go off the preconceived and categorised that were given to us by the random dance in Europe and America.

As for the other works in the Dance Company's recent programme, both of them are interesting to watch, both are nice or less well put together, but neither of them leave me with anything approaching a positive reaction.

Christian Böhm's *Cambrian Beach* is, as far as I am concerned, a pretty basic shot of hollow hand-waving done to the backdrop of a rather "Tribalist Beliefs" piece of music by Michael Caruso.

Her stated concern in the work is the driving and struggle that we all put into communicating. Struggle, that nearly always ends in a deadlock, so the process has to be begun all over again.

The only moment where all the names come into any recognisable focus is an extended slow haul way through the work full of high falls that seek into upstaged chairs and broken solos. Here the idea of *Kohai* comes also, but as for the馮紹, it is one of those ballets that starts, and starts and starts but never really gets anywhere.

The same goes for Graeme Watson's *Aboriginal Music*, an adumbrated piece of stylised raps, no song in the programme worth half of Alfonso's or Marcel Dagherty and the extraneous, abstruse, that are never clarified in the work itself.

I much preferred Watson's *Random Harvest* last year. There was movement invested with feeling and meaning, whereas *Aboriginal Music* is too theoretical, too physically even.

It suffers from the same trouble as Spock's *Two Number*, a convoluted conceptual sort of presenting material, but material too remote to be brought under control by the choreographer.

If both Watson and Spock could get out of the habit of abstrusely objectifying and obscuring over dance, and produce a piece of pure get feeling, I feel sure that they, with the intentions they obviously have, can produce a work that is coherent, sensible and logical in its own way. At the moment they are thinking more in terms of tying up steps than in creating a feeling, a statement or an overall design.



Murphy's Ty

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Dennis Olsen
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SYDNEY OPERA HOUSE September 28-November 12

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Boxes, Boxes and more Boxes

Beethoven quartets and Bach cantatas

Judging by the supply at recorders, the record market has an unusual appetite for boxed sets of records: the complete string chamber music of Brahms, all the late Haydn quartets, the entire works of Webern (an 18-box), complete sets of 18th century sonatas, concertos and symphonies, even multi-editions of one composer's works such as the huge 260+ compilation of Beethovens. Far from being a scandal by this hulking load of presentation we seem to think it is as if we did not want so much to listen to music as to take it home with it! And why not? In the absence, for many people, of a philosophical and religious assessment it is possible that we may believe that a box of all the Beethoven quartets or the complete Dresdener sequence of the Maggio symphonies represents the only credible path to wisdom we are likely to find. There are obviously boxes and boxes some may be no more than the manufacturer's method of gathering together a scattering of old recordings in order to give them fresh circulation. The best kind of record box is the one in which a single group of performers give a *consistent view*, in records not too separated in date, of some music that we are likely to want to live with.

My leading choice among number boxes in recent months has been the Philips issue of the complete string quartets by Beethoven played by the Quartetto Italiano (9047 277 recordings). The quality of reproduction on these discs is debonair. Though the recordings were issued separately over a period of several years (the same 18 quartets being the most recent) the sound and style of recording has remained remarkably consistent and of very high average quality. No doubt this has been further assisted during reprocessing made for the boxed edition. Some listeners may have a few misgivings against hearing an Italian quartet in Amico-German dress. But the Quartetto Italiano believe that their Italianic group of Italian musicians (including Toscanini and Giulini) who are able to interpret northern and southern European music without ever being able to typify their in coming from one region or another. If the Quartetto Italiano reflect its origins at all it is in a certain northern Italian past, allied with warmth but without the slightest trace of excess in tone or gaudiness. Its players pass all the tests. They do not try to make the open 1st quartets sound later or more complex than they are. They have the warmth and splendour of style for open 29 and 1 and the heat, fassone, ebullition of manner for open 93, the alacrity for the Great Fugue and

the reticulated and architectural control necessary for open 131. These recordings sound with cultivated sound and performance of unrepudiable consistency and precision. The only real fault in the Quartetto Italiano is that at the moment in the Beethoven series recorded by the Hungarian Quartet, but that is considerably older and the difference in recorded sound is apparent even in re-issues.

Among the boxes which appear as part of a projected sequence my available favourites are those containing recordings in Telefunken's wonderful series of the complete cantatas of JS Bach. Each box in the series contains two discs (usually enough for four cantatas) and adds to the discs a wealth of documentation, the texts and instrumental parts for each work and the complete scores of all the works in the box. These works are now being reissued from the New Bach Edition and provide at a bonus the opportunity of catching up with the remarkable advances made in Bach scholarship in the last fifteen years or so. The artistic directors of the performances are Nikolaus Harnoncourt and Gustav Leonhardt. Prancers in the use of historically authentic instruments and playing styles, they divide the cantatas up between them and present them in sequences as close as we can hope in some of the present time to the records that Bach himself would have imagined when scoring them. The otherwise divided forces (choir and organ) also contribute to the practice of the church of Bach's time. For similar reasons, almost all the solos are male. Although the boy solists constitute the most variable item in the standards of performance, they are generally very good indeed. The point I want to stress is that the attempts at historical fidelity are not merely musical exercises; they add for research something to the impact made by the music. The playing and singing is very skilful.

All the boxes in the Bach cantata series are commendable. May I particularly draw your attention to the latest box in the series to be generally available here, Volume 17 (90203, rec. 1981), which contains the cantatas numbered 62 to 69 in the old Schenker catalogue. If you have not previously heard the records in this series, this box will offer you a fair sample of the achievements represented by the project, probably the most ambitious and voluminous in the history of recording. The range of the music ranges from engraved austerity to exuberant joy solo singers, choruses and instrumentalists work with consummate skill.

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The Singer and the Dancer
Love Letters from Teralba Road



Leah Pirie and Ruth Cracknell in *The Singer and the Dancer*

One could suppose it not beyond the capacity of exhibitors to devise a first half that would include one of these

The Australian Film Commission has apparently decided to put some specially selected items of the smaller feature films into which it has injected money, with the object of getting them before the public. To this end they have arranged releases at the Union Theatre at the University of Sydney and elsewhere for a period in November, exclusive to them but for anything else than *The Cascades Crossing* (I may say here that *The Cascades Crossing* is about as bad a film as can be).

It is important for non-feature films to get a showing, but one of the difficulties is the peculiar running time of, say, two that the AFC is rightly pushing — Gill Armstrong's *The Singer and the Dancer* and *Love Letters from Teralba Road* made by Stephen Wallace. The first runs for 60 minutes and the second for 53. These are awkward lengths to fit into the regular Australian program, although one could suppose it was beyond the capacity of exhibitors to devise a first half that would include one of them, another short subject and the indispensable curtain raiser. I suppose the exhibitor simply will not

pay for them when they can get travel publicity films for nothing or those government project films which seem to be about the steel industry or Victorian hydro-electric schemes. It opens up the question of the way commercial cinema programmes are structured — why there is no such thing as a truly continuous programme for instance.

I don't think the AFC's idea of showing *The Singer and the Dancer* and *Love Letters from Teralba Road* together at the Union Theatre was necessarily a good one, but I expect they knew their own business best. I would have preferred to see each one go on separately as a short subject prelude to a feature film. *The Singer and the Dancer* has had a success already in Melbourne but Anne Lawson was often pressed at the Union. Gill Armstrong got her job from a short story by Alan Marshall. She rearranged the characters somewhat but kept to the basic motifs, and to the tone of the story, which is about frustrations experienced by the old and frustrations being experienced by the young.

The opening is remarkable for its incomparable beauty and grace, a poised character by a glimpse of a face, held by the fall of the curtain, staring out of a window in the landscape, an expressive use of controlled fury. That moment over, there is a change to the realness, even to the prosaically mundane. Old Mrs Wilson is prodded from the farmhouse, down the steps by a woman who is presumably her daughter, and into the doctor's car.

"Now mother, don't give the physician any trouble, and don't get wandering about," Mrs Wilson is admonished.

A few miles down the road Mrs Wilson throws her bit off onto the back seat, pulls up her skirt, peers her large legs on the dashboard and smokes a cigarette the doctor gives her. He stops the car near a gate into a paddock and she hurries out and makes off up the hill in great strides. The doctor is in the pith, which is that Mrs Wilson pretends to be sick because it is her only way of defending herself against the other bony, smug, thick-skinned woman.

Up the hill, down the other side to the river bank tramps Mrs Wilson, she changes into her undaks, takes out another fag, lies on her back with her bit pulled up to lie over her warm hot legs, and listens to the dogs in her tray. At this place one day the visitors is only girl called Charlie who has moved with her sensible whining lover into a rundown cottage, and is trying to

make a life for herself while he works at the chicken factory and harasses her with a local holt. The old woman and the young one talk about men and love. The old woman is full of wisdom which amazes or stimulates spirts. The young one is full of fire that she won't be able to leave her lover. She should worry — it will burn for the fat gal who will give her a lift in her car, north or south.

The players are Ruth Cracknell as old Mrs Brown, Elizabeth Croft as Charlie, Garry Dugan as the doctor, Julie Roring as the "daughter" who is really another woman's daughter, fathered by Mrs Brown's dead husband, and Charlie's boy is played by Russell Kain. I have always believed in Ruth Cracknell's intelligent, unaffected talents and in Garry Dugan, who has found a director who perfectly understands her. Here is an amazing performance — so sure, so sensitive, so strong, in many ways so fiery. She expresses all the emotions, resilience, frankness, old woman who returns to the red a kind of youthful vitality, looks and a fragrancy that is indescribable. They are the names of old pin-up girls, and good luck to them.

The film is exactly the right length. There should be no more of it, and no less. What brings us back to the where we came in. *Love Letters from Darling Road* will make you squirm. The people in it are few, yet like down from Michael Thorpe's characters at the P.J. Whelans.

Stylistically, that is. But in fact Lee and Barbara of *Love Letters* might well be Kevin and Anna of *The Big Picture* in their sex lives. Lee works in a quiet pub nearabout in Newcastle, frequents the pub and the club and one night comes home, nursing from some self-inflicted wound and books up Barbara on the reason that she has been sent to the shop making up a Den. Den gets no further mention as Lee lays about him. The next day Den leaves, running to Sydney and the ramshackle home of her father — the mother has left, and no wonder — and has sub-rent over. Barbara gets out a bit with other guys. Lee gets out a bit with other girls. There is one startling scene, introduced unexpectedly, in which he comes to book with a disturbed boy in the club. This may be interpreted to show that Lee is a killer, in imitation if not in fact, but if so it is not followed up. There is also the implication that Lee has a few bedding points at work, as he shuffles around the shelves of the supermarket with a sheet of orders, knowing as he commands.

If this were just a story of a marriage splitting down the middle, it would be unimportant. Two things make a difference. One is that Lee starts writing letters to Barbara, in phrases totally unlike any he would use in the normal course of correspondence, and expressing sensations, like this girl friend in the pub, that are really unlike hers. Stephen Wallace, the director/writer, says he found the trouble of love letters on which he based his film in an old, run-down house. Perhaps had he

looked further, he would have found the model for Lee's initial letters in a magazine. When Lee takes the Newcastle Flyer to Sydney to spend the weekend with Barbara at her brother's house almost nothing goes right.

It has to be said that Lee and Barbara are far from a pally pair. Neither of them makes in Lee's case it may be that his acting worth, of which he complains continually, probably says something. And when Barbara is a bit drunk, she dances and sings to himself, but not popularly.

The weekend is not a success. They fail to make it into bed. An audience may be inclined to hope that Barbara will live the same sort of life as Lee, back, and to leave

her father and his nearby sister. No sense place where she can take advantage of her good looks, learn to speak gravely and perhaps open a savings bank account.

I don't mean to be flippancy. At the time, I took the film very seriously, and admired its direction, simple work, measured scenes and, at times, the writing. At any rate, I am not so sure. And it has one flaw that has marred it with any of the last two mentioned above. It happens that Bryan Brown, who plays Lee and Karl McQuade who plays Barbara, are just too much alike — sharp profile, dark hair, knowing expression. Physical contrast is missing, and it takes something from the film.

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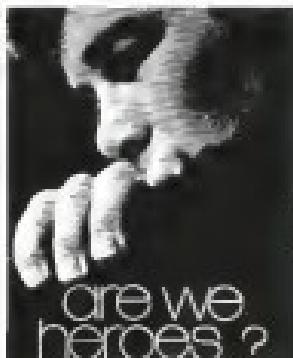
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All intending performing arts students are required to attend an interview during which their aptitude for the course is evaluated.

Further information about the course and the interview procedures can be obtained from:

The Department of Performing Arts, School of Arts, Darling Downs Institute of Advanced Education, Toowoomba, Qld. 4350 (2996)

Some Approaches to drama in schools



Bruno Borsig, der die Beweise für Erfahrungen in
Bildung und Entwicklung, Universität
Nürnberg-Fürth, Sommersemester 1976.

Dund Saif, A Practical Guide to Drama in the Secondary Schools, Ward Lock Educational, London 1973.

Teacher Trainer and Other Plays: Appalachian Authors and Other Plays and Scripts for a Highweight and Other Plays Series Play Series. Scholastic Books, Inc.

Earlier I wrote about educational drama books. I was pleased for a few less prescriptive and a few more experienced based books on the subject. With that in mind, I have now received my prayers answered or least wished for. Published last year, this book represents with optimism & enthusiasm the experiences of a teacher discovering the possibilities of educational drama in a secondary high school of Sydney. Michael May is wrong on the role of modesty when he describes himself as having travelled solo to this as a monologue, for the contents has an openness familiarity with those of drama graduates who prefer to play with 'magic rather than research books.'

Historically in New South Wales there is a long record in this book, well paid tribute to the kind of work Dr Ober-Palau's educational drama chapter at the University of NSW has been doing. It stands to reason that the emergence of speculative graduates such as Mr Bryn from the University and CAE drama courses must have a state wide impact in the schools.

This book is not a diary, but a text-book, and has to be read through progressively, stage by stage. Much of it is ordered written in the straight diary form, with the details of each day and the names

all participants freely mentioned. The open quality is one of the very attractive features of the book, as it allows the writers to explore very freely their own fascinations in both discipline and education. Submissions that are close to the body of the text and connected in several postscript scenarios to individual projects, such as "Doubts Collected" or "24 hours", are printed, then the diary takes up the development of these concerns.

There is an intriguing account, too, of Mr. Riley's experience as a drama department teacher — especially a developing one — with 120 girls at Pennsylvania High School. But the more these languorous events help validate learning situations for himself at least, and ends up rejecting Peter Shale's idea of "teaching" in a classroom for his own "big finish."

Secondary teachers will doubtless be interested in Mr. Grey's study at Ontario's Cleveland Street High, but they would be ill-advised to turn to it without reading of the kinds of experience which made possible his comprehensive approach to these students in this play. This is a book to be read right through, not from the opening and optimistic ending in which the writer repeats conventional notions of success and failure for educational drama in favour of group standards about the value of any enterprise.

Another pleasantly open book is David Self's *A Practical Guide to Drama in the Secondary School*, one of the best practical manuals on creative drama that I have ever read. It begins with a few introductory tales for the memory or imagination. Drama teacher, then goes into eleven succinct chapters, keenly subdivided, which are concerned with ideas and approaches to "creative" rather than "dramatic" drama. On this last it provides a source of refuge, values and advice for the harassed classroom drama teacher, often reviled or misunderstood by his colleagues.

Mr Self's book, moreover, goes deeper than this, providing as it does countless scholarly, public service, and literary references on the subject. It challenges some of Bruce Way's findings in relating drama exercises to the experience of local students, and makes cogent and intelligent use of quotations from other experts. Especially like the case in education from Pomeroy-Beling and Cheng is the effect that "just because we have had a drama lesson (a class) doesn't mean we're good at the way (in the science lab)." Self goes on to make the author feel that education and one cannot live without the other.

While the writer goes through the various stages of working with secondary and by implication some area younger students, his most fascinating chapter is then called "Sharing a lesson." The tricky question of improving teacher effectiveness is explored, as are possible approaches to discipline and the means to which a teacher might encourage in the areas of learning. In the later part Mr. Bell is surprisingly courageous, although his favorite kind of drama teacher is clearly a flexible and reasonably robust person, who may take a back seat when appropriate.

While the bulk of the book is taken up with handy exercises and suggestions to private drama classes, the author readily admits that actors especially welcome the idea of being seeds, sunflowers, and the like. There are also designs of distinguishing themselves from their roles and development because of early found aspiration and self-realization. It is at this point, argues Scott, that the teacher can really introduce "dramatic" drama, which aims to communicate to an audience and looks toward art and reality. Even so, one should be wary of returning to the constitutionally weighted play, so conspicuously "art" and documentary drama techniques are organized in a chapter called "Playmaking." Finally, there are some sensible words about the social performances which are traditionally expected of drama teachers' students. Limiting audience departments, getting something out of the whole exercise — all such notions are approached intuitively. This is a superbly detailed, and totally useful book.

By contrast the American educational drama books we continue to receive, are directed largely to performance. In *Requiem for a Heavyweight* and *Other Plays*, the assumption is that students will want to play, which deals with serious adolescent problems. The *White Cube*, a Musical-Wellby play, approaches such problems with self-righteous intimacy, and while students may be encouraged to act simple versions of alienated experiences they have had — especially in the negative TV play *Private Teacher* by Bessie Conwell — it is hard to see what adolescent teachers could make of these plays as drama (as opposed to, say, school students' classes). Much of the dialogue is in general American, and the problems perhaps too localized. But more to the point, the roles are written for the kind of uneducated adult TV audience which would be beyond the scope of the average secondary student. If one does want to practice this kind of writing, but it is hard to see where it fits into the drama classes mentioned in the section.

GUIDE

NEW SOUTH WALES

ACTORS COMPANY (669 2503)

The Tale of Despereaux, by Tony Wright and Meg Ahrens, directed by Tony Wright. Children's production, 14-18 Sept.

Coy Senior, by Stephen Poliakoff, directed by Michael Roffe, and *Oscar*, by Henrik Ibsen, directed by Matthew O'Sullivan. Playing in repertory from 7 Sept.

ARTS COMMISSION OF NEW SOUTH WALES (31 661)

The Dark Woodward Red Paper Workshops, primary schools tour, Sydney metropolitan area, from 19 Sept.

New England Favourites, chamber music tour comprising Andover, Loxton, Roberta, Hurst, Anna Lunn, primary schools and adult concerts, central western New South Wales 26-30 Sept.

Ray Price Quartet, primary and secondary schools and adult concerts, Hunter and New England districts, 14-25 Sept.; Hunter and north coast districts, 9-14 Oct.

Modern Music Theatre, primary schools tour, Hunter, New England and south coast districts, from 19 Sept.

Perseus, An Opera for 500+ Voices, directed and performed by Howard Spiegel, presented by arrangement with the State Opera of South Australia. Secondary schools and adult concerts, metropolitan, south coast, Riverina and coastal western N.S.W., from 12 Sept.

The Bell & Bush Show, 1966 Frank Stoen's Theatre Restaurant, William Street, Sydney, directed by George Corden, with Rod Meese, Loughlin Wells, Dennis Lee, John Birrell, John Godfrey. Playing south coast, Riverina and western districts of N.S.W. from 12 Sept.

AUSTRALIAN OPERA (76 2974)

Sydney Opera House (21 038)

Opera Theatre, *Machiavelli* (Verdi) in Italian, 1 Sept., 3 Sept. (mat), 7 Sept., 10 Sept. (mat), 12, 16 Sept. Conductor, Carlo Felice Cifarelli, producer, John Copley, designer, Silvana Lazzarini, recorded producer, Michael Headlam. With Elizabeth Connell, John Shaw, Lambert Padua, Alison Austin, Donald Shanks or Clifford Gray.

Amor Doloroso (Auber) in English, 2, 4, 18 Sept. (mat), 14, 16, 20, 24 Sept. (mat), 1 Oct.

(mat). Conductor, Peter Holloman, producer, John Copley, designer, Michael Headlam (matinee) and Henry Burden (mat); resident producer, Eliza McNeilly. With Robert Gard, Dennis Olsen, Heather Berg, as Isolde, Birmingham, Hans Wilder, Grant Dickson, Isabel Buchanan, Graeme Ewer, Neil Warren-Smith.

The Flying Dutchman (Wagner) in German, 1 Sept. (mat), 4, 8, 9, 13, 15, 17 Sept. (mat), 19, 21, 22, 24, 26 Sept. (mat), 3 Oct., 6 Oct. (mat). Conductor, Carlo Felice Cifarelli or George Szell, producer, Peter Petersen, designer, Boris Tschirner, resident producer, Eliza McNeilly. With Robert Alliston or Raymond Myatt, Lois Koppell-Winter or Nancy Gunn, Rosina Radford or Lesley Stanhope, Ronald Dowd or Reginald Byers, Ruth Donald or Alison Austin, Neil Warren-Smith or Donald Shaikha.

The Consul (Glinka and Soltikov) in English, 28, 29, 30 Sept., 1 Oct. (mat), 4, 5, 6, 7, 8 Oct. (mat), 10 Oct. Designer, Tim Longmuir. With Jennifer Bentham, Rhonda Bruce, Meryl Purvis, Rosemary Gethin, Cynthia Johnston, Roslyn Radford, Louise Minister, Graeme Ewer, Robert Gard or Paul Ferris, John Greenman, Alan Leigh, Ronald Mikuta, Dennis Olsen.

AUSTRALIAN THEATRE, Newtown (31 3641)

Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf? by Edward Albee, directed and designed by John Gally, with Tony Gardiner, Murray Wilson, Linda Van Dorn and Helene Gruber 10-24 September.

AUSTRALIAN THEATRE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE (669 8221)

Doolittle, by Richard Tarshis, with Jan Cullinan and Ray Anderson. Touring primary schools, Wagga Wagga, south coast, Riverina and coastal western districts of NSW from 19 Sept.

Workshops at NIDA (Saturday, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m., 10-16 of year).

BONDI PAVILION THEATRE (30 7211)

Popcorn, a history of the world served and presented as an exercise by students of the school of fine arts, Alexander Mackie College, and the drama department, University of New South Wales 20 Sept. to 4 Oct.

CONSERVATORIUM OF MUSIC (21 4206/27 9201)

Grateful Dead (Krautrock) and *Anglophile* (Horn) in English. Director, Anthony French, designer, William Fairhurst.

Grateful Dead conducted by Robert Pilcher, with Ronald Dowd. *Anglophile* conducted by Richard Gall 14, 16, 22 October.

DUNSE MIRE (329 2871)

Box-Meet God, by Billie and Samuel Spewack, directed by Hayes Gordon, designed by Doug Anderson. With John McTernan, William Charlton, Les Kasserman, Linda Hunter. Continuing.

GENESIE (327 2021)

The Discreet Guest, by Agatha Christie, directed and designed by Ray Arnessworth. With Gaynor Minden, Perren, Mark, Sue Nance. To 24 Sept.

An Ideal Husband, by Oscar Wilde, directed and designed by Don Alles from 1 Oct.

HER MAJESTY'S (322 3481)

A Cherry Tree, original production conceived, choreographed and directed by Michael Bennett, co-choreographer, Bob Avian, book by James Keivom and Nicholas Beale, music by Marvin Hamlisch, lyrics by Edward Kleban, choreography and direction revised for Australia by Ingmar Lar and Jeff Harris. Cast 10th Company.

LILLIAN RHO COFFEE THEATRE (328 2553)

Julio London, directed by John Hawti, with John Hawti, Peter Perlman, Cheyne Pepp. Continuing.

MARIAN STREET (669 3164)

John Watch by Martin Worth and Peter Tedman, directed by Alastair Duncar, designed by Brian Pickard. With Barry Lovett, Sue Walker, Lynn Rainbow. To 26 Oct.

MARIONETTE THEATRE OF AUSTRALIA (327 1612)

Frogs, written and directed by Ballard Bradshaw, and *Wanda*, devised by the company and directed by Richard Bradshaw. Outer suburban/乡郊 schools holiday season, Parramatta area to 2 Sept., Sutherland Civic Centre, 6-10 Sept., touring schools, north coast, New South Wales 13-18 Sept.

MUSIC HALL THEATRE (FESTIVAL BANT) (669 8225)

East Is Power or West Is Parasite, women and directed by Michael Boddy, with Alan Harvey, John Allen, Anne Soper. Continuing.

NEW THEATRE (319 3401)

Caprice of Empress by Carl Zuckmayer, directed by Jack Ley, designed by Frederick Shaw. From 10 Sept.

MUSIC LOST THEATRE RESTAURANT (07 6585)
Sir Glora Dean Show, produced by William Orr, with Alan Davis, M P Branson, David Chisholm Consulting.

MINEROO (W 180)

Upstage, Zoot, by Jim McNeat, directed by Ken Harter, designed by Lucy Eastwood. From 17 Sept.
Dominators, Teachers, by David Hart, directed by Raelene Wherren Consulting.

Q10 NOTE (03 6121)

Drama Theatre, Opera House. The Time Is Now For Love, by Leon Escoe, directed by Peter Collingwood, designed by Anne Fisher. With Rob Norton, Helen Morse, Neil Fitzpatrick, Jean Bruce, Peter Collingwood, Helen Beering, Margaret Ford. Al Thomas. From 7 Sept.
Mothers and Fathers, by Joseph Massapha, directed by Bill Baldwin, designed by Mike Bridges. From 17 Sept.
New York Thirteen, Seymour Carter. The Norman Conquests / Fable. Men and Women Living Together and Round and Round the Garden, by Alan Ayckbourn, directed by Robert Quinton, designed by Tony Eastwood. With Alan John, Tony Jewell-Jones, Peter Adams, Vernon Lang, Jennifer Hayes and Paul Trilogy continuing in repertory.

OSCAR'S HOLLYWOOD PALACE THEATRE RESTAURANT (See Boxes 029-030)

The Olive Severe, revised and written by Gary Dornan and Joe Feltham, directed and staged by Jim Falshaw. With Jeff Miller, Geraldine Murray, Margaret Stewart, Roma Colman, Lyn Lovett Consulting.

QT THEATRE (Parramatta 067 21 9125)

The Entertainer, by John Osborne, directed by Richard Brooks, designed by Arthur Dakin, with Ron Hachet. Al Reddyway Institute, Parramatta, 14-23 Sept., Civic Centre, Bankstown, 26 Sept. to 7 Oct., Marconi Rehabilitation Centre, Parramatta, 9-10 Oct.

QT SHOW CENTRE (062 0155)

The Motor Show, by Steve Gaze, directed by Robert Lawrence, designed by Edward Bond, with the City Road Youth Theatre high school pupils, aged 13 to 20. Waterloo Road to the Deep North, by Edward Bond, directed by Scott McGregor, designed by Michael Lerner, presented by Sydney University Dramatic Society. Downing, 7-24 Sept.

SPEAKEASY THEATRE 828-TALIBANT, Kissing Point (061 7142)

The Big Bang Show, conceived by Hugh Hale and Bryan Brown, directed by Hugh Hale, designed by Cliff Simons. With Peter Corbett, Ross Sharp, John Everett, Tim Howell, Victoria Nash, Douglas Rossman Consulting.

THEATRE ROYAL (221 6533 or 211 6111)

Boring Money, by Marc Caraman, adapted from the French by Beverley Cross, directed by Doug Fisher, designed by Bill Dowd, starring Richard O'Neill, with Doug Fisher, Shirley Cameron, Kate Hart, Judith Woodbridge. To 23 Sept.
Viva la Salsa! (London), From 27 Sept.

WHITE HORSE HOTEL, Newtown (02 1922)

A Jester's Number, by Mick Mayne, Features Kirby, Peter Stevens and Malcolm Frayling, directed by Ian Tasker, designed by Peter Fisher and Steven Frayling. To 24 Sept.

WHITE HORSE HOTEL, Newtown (02 1922)

A Jester's Number, by Mick Mayne, Features Kirby, Peter Stevens and Malcolm Frayling, directed by Ian Tasker, designed by Peter Fisher and Steven Frayling. To 24 Sept.

Q
QUEENSLAND

ARTS THEATRE (06 2344)

Chair of Comradage, by Ray Cooney. Director Catherine Sparks. To 8 Oct.

CAMPBELL (06 6561)

To Put Her in His Place, by John Ford Davies; Cat Whiskers. From 21 Sept.

HER MAJESTY'S (221 2777)

(Premiered Sally — see below.)
Raving, Raving, by Marc Caraman, adapted from the French by Beverley Cross, directed by Doug Fisher. Open 26 Sept.

LA BOITE (M 1912 or M 1296)

Jack the Ripper, by Ron Passer, and Dennis Morris in association with Larry Parker and Ron Nicholls. Director, Jo Denner. 16-30 Sept.
Amisport, by Jean Anouilh. Middle Stages production. 28-29 Sept.

QUEENSLAND ARTS COUNCIL (221 9980)

In Just Six, for Breakfast, by Greg Stipe and Ray Cooney. State 1981 commission. 21 Sept.
Friends, Friends, Friends, QTC secondary schools tour, South East Queensland.
Alexander Moore, Spanish Dancer. Special winter arts project. 29 Aug-16 Sept.

Kin Foyer (Queen's South East Queensland tour). From 26 Sept.

Swinge, a Play, David and Sally Parker manuscripts. Tour, 1981, touring in far north.

Alice Hood Australian Folk Tales, touring in South West Queensland.

QUEENSLAND BALLET COMPANY (229 1335)

At Her Majesty's Theatre. Coppelia, choreography narrated by Linda White and Cyril John. Production and additional choreography by Harry Hopfoldie. Scenery Kenneth Raynes, costumes, Pamela Conder. To 10 Sept.
Adults for Pleasure including adult — choreographer, Charles Lester, senior Out of Control — choreographer, Peter

Darrell, The Fisher — choreographer, Garth Welch. La Fanciulla — choreographer, August Horstmann. 14-17 Sept.

QUEENSLAND THEATRE COMPANY (221 2861)

The Blue Dahl, by Thomas Macchiarri. Director, Robin Lowry. With Ron Hoddock and Marcella Bergogni. 24 Aug-17 Sept. Return, Sept. 20-21. Otherwise directed by Susan Gray. Open 25 Oct.

QUEENSLAND OPERA COMPANY (221 2791)

at S.G.O. Theatre
The Marriage of Figaro, by Mozart. Produced by Anthony Bush. Conductor, Graeme Young, designer, Alan Lee. With Dennis Wilson, Arthur Johnson, Sally Robertson, Max Davis, Harry Clarke, Glenn Dunn and Robyn Syal. 11, 18, 20 Sept. 4, 6, 8 Oct.

G. F. Handel, by York Power, John Thompson, Conductor, Georg Teodor Dougan. Peter Cossé. With Yusuf Kayser, Philipp Hall, Margaret Russell, Paul Head, Robert Harrington and Barry Clarke. 29 Sept. 1, 2, 3, 7 Oct.

TWELFTH NIGHT (02 5889)

The Spokes Web, by Agatha Christie. Director, Belinda Stephen. 2-17 Sept.
Sense in Sensibility, by Frank White. Director, Jan Whalley. 21 Sept.-13 Oct.



A.C.T.

CANBERRA PLAYHOUSE (49 0488)

Australian Stage Company
Never the Twain, an entertainment based on the works of Rudyard Kipling and Bertolt Brecht, compiled by John Wright and directed by Ned Cherry. With Kylie Archer, Howard Soper, Lynden Thomas, George Winsley and Michael Worley. 13-19 Sept.

A Series of Unfortunate Events, by Jack Pohler, AFG production. Directed by Paul Hampton, designed by John Keong, with Miss Collins. 19-23 September.

CANBERRA THEATRE (49 8211)

Sister White and the Seven Dwarfs. To 3 September.

Terrestrial Terresters! Gilbert and Sullivan musical revue by Ian Taylor. Director, Ted Craig, designer, David Weston. With Ben Swig and John Parsons. 6-10 September.

Seize the Day by Sondheim. 19-24 September.

HIBBUCK'S THEATRE RESTAURANT (02 2013)

Owner of a Lifetime by Ron Passer and

John McKellar, directed by James Hutchins with Robert Corcoran, Doug Wolstenholme and Mary Vincent (contours). To 3 Sept.

THEATRE THREE (07 4212)

Queensland Repertory Society

The Arrival of the Mail by Mitzi Glik, directed by Rodney Fisher. To 3 Sept.

Twelfth Night opened October.



SOUTH AUSTRALIA

LITTLE THEATRE

Doctor and Other Mysterious. Recent adaptation of Dickens' pieces directed by Steve Brown. To 1 Sept. - Oct.

OPERA THEATRE (formerly Her Majesty's) (07 2292)

Doctor In Love, by Richard Gordon with Robin McNeill and Geoffrey Dunn. To 27 Sept. - 19 Oct.

KEDDISH

Troupe British/our Los Angeles production and directed by David Allen. To 25 Sept. Then to San Francisco.

SHERIDAN THEATRE (067 2251)

Adelaide Theatre Group. The Merry Wives of Windsor by Harold Pinter, directed by Malcolm Blaylock. Weds and Sun. to 24 Sept.

SOUTH AUSTRALIAN THEATRE COMPANY (SI 5151)

Aussie Guy Five Gun, music and lyrics by Frank Berlin. Directed by Colin George, designed by Rodney Fisher, movement by Michael Fisher, with Dorothy Vernon and Karen Miller. To 24 Sept.

STATE OPERA (032 3758 or 352 3566)

Federal Theatre (SI 3090)

Mid'St Rhapsody. Gilbert and Sullivan Conductor, Myer Freedman, director, Adam Stark designer, Jim Cooper with Edward Woodward. Poly Hanningen, Thomas Edmunds, John Wood, David Brown, Norma Knight, Keith Hampton

UNION HALL

Adelaide University Guild

Double Double, by William Congreve, by Graham North 14 Sept.-1 Oct.



TASMANIA

TASMANIAN PUPPET

THEATRE (23 7996)

Company 1 Cat and Dog, for infants playing North West road trip of Tasmania.

Company 2 Master Price's Puppet Show, Primary Schools, North West region of Tasmania. 12 Sept.-25 Nov.

THEATRE ROYAL (04 8206)

The Twenties and '40s That Jazz, a musical recollection with Julie Dench, Caroline Gilman and John O'May. To 1 Sept.

Ghosts in Love, by Richard Gordon with Robin McNeill and Geoffrey Dunn. 8-17 Sept.

The Club, by David Williamson. MTC production, directed by Rodney Fisher, designed by Steven Ganson. From 26 Sept.



VICTORIA

ALEXANDER THEATRE

(03 3828)

Richard Bradbury and His Shadow Puppets. 10, 14 Sept.

AUSTRALIAN PERFORMING GROUP (047 7132)

Paper Factory. Return season of Jack Hildon's A Stretch of the Imagination. To 14 Sept.

A Fragrance of Desire, by the Lead Balloon Dance Company. From 15 Sept.

COMEDY THEATRE (061 3711)

Jeffrey Archer, by Miss Scott, directed by Jeffrey Campbell, designed by Patrick Robertson. With George Layton and Bruce Spence.

THE HOOPLA THEATRE FOUNDATION

Playbox Theatre (03 4885)

The Education of Agnes Franklin, by Steve J. Spero, directed by Richard Wherrett, designed by Lucy Entwistle. With Gordon Clague. Parasolite Productions. Containing

LA MAMA (03 662655)

Tenth Anniversary Festival.

L.A.S.T. LAUGH THEATRE RESTAURANT (09 62126)

Master, There's a Crook in My Soap, directed by Gary Patterson. To 1 Sept.

Last Laugh's First Birthday Party with a Star cast. 6-10 Sept. Return of Where There's a Crook in My Soap. 11 Sept.

MELBOURNE THEATRE COMPANY (035 1190)

Afternoon. The Merchant of Venice, by William Shakespeare, directed by John Suckler. To 3 Sept. Pigmalion, directed by Roy Lomax. Designed by Hugh Colman. From 13 Sept.

Russell Street. The Club, by David Williamson, directed by Rodney Fisher, designed by Steven Ganson. To 24 Sept.

The Bustard From The Bush And Other Stories by Henry Lawson. Performed by Roger Ramsay. From 29 Sept.

St. Martin's Alibi, by David Runkle, directed by Nick Rodger, designed by Steve Polson, with Lynette Curran, Jon Penneyman, Ann French and Bruce Mylne. To 24 Sept.

PILGRIM PUPPET THEATRE (03 662609)

David the Guest Author, by June Epstein

PRINCESS THEATRE

Wander Woman, by and with Reg Livermore, directed by Peter Bailey. Presented by Eric Dace. Containing

ST KILDA PALACE (03 6610)

Let Romance, Mystery in a Cage and Fury, The End. 14-20 Sept. Peter and the Wolf. 26-30 Sept.

VICTORIA STATE OPERA (01 5081)

Peter & Flinders & Things, or, The Three Lives of Private Paper, by Peter Norman. Containing 40 schools tour, Melbourne metropolitan area.



WESTERN AUSTRALIA

CIVIC THEATRE RESTAURANT (02 1295)

The Big Fair. New Show, Change of programme! With Miss Kay, Alice Dale, Peter Dean, Bobby Haun, Marie-Anne Koenig and the Shirley Holiday Show Girls. Containing

HOLE IN THE WALL (01 2465)

Long Day's Journey into Night by Eugene O'Neill. Director, Raymond O'Neale. With Neville Teodosi and Margaret Ashton. 28 Aug.-24 Sept.

PLAYHOUSE (02 3344)

Dowton, Double Edge, by Peter Whelan and Linda Dalton. Director, Andrew Ross, designer, Alan French. With Carole Stilwell, Dennis Miller and Leslie Wright. To 10 Sept.

Of Men and Men, by John Strachey. Director, Anne Morris. 22 Sept.-12 Oct.

REGAL SALOON (01 1257)

The Twenties and '40s That Jazz, a musical recollection with Julie Dench, Caroline Gilman and John O'May. Opens 2 Sept.

W.A. BALLET COMPANY (03 4168)

Oregon Theatre. Set Point & Love Affair, by Leigh Warren. The Fourcress, an abstract ballet by Peter Durrill. New York by Garth Welsh. 21-24 Sept., 25 Sept. of Oct.

W.A. THEATRE COMPANY

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